

National Restaurant Association

Vol. 4 ☐ No. 5 ☐ May 1984

NRA *NEWS*



FOOD ON THE MOVE

NRA MEETINGS

American Regional Cookery

- 6/26-27 Detroit, MI
7/24 Chicago, IL
7/31 Philadelphia, PA

Off-Premise Catering

- 7/9-10 Milwaukee, WI
7/23-24 Kansas City, MO

Computers in Foodservice: A Primer*

- 6/4 New Orleans, LA
6/18 Kansas City, MO

Computers in Foodservice: Advanced Technologies/Now That I Have One . . . *

- 6/5 New Orleans, LA
6/19 Kansas City, MO

Dining Room Management

- 6/4 Newport, RI
6/13 Washington, DC
6/25 Indianapolis, IN
6/27 Wichita, KS
7/9 Detroit, MI
7/11 Cincinnati, OH
7/26 Arlington, TX

Controlling Food Cost

- 6/18 Salt Lake City, UT

Food Cost Management

- 7/31 Owensboro, KY

Kitchen Management

- 5/29 Ft. Worth, TX
6/11 Minneapolis, MN
6/13 Omaha, NE
6/20 Lancaster, PA
6/25 Billings, MT
6/27 Boise, ID
7/16 Annapolis, MD
7/23 Portland, ME

Principles of Labor Cost Management*

- 6/11 Dewey Beach, DE

Advanced Labor Cost Management*

- 6/12 Dewey Beach, DE

Menu Development

- 7/30 Des Moines, IA

IN-HOUSE PROGRAMS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

* Please note that there are basic and advanced courses on the topics of labor cost controls and computers. These programs are scheduled consecutively, but either one can be taken independently of the other.

Creative Merchandising Techniques

- 6/4 Tacoma, WA
6/5 Portland, OR
7/26 Grand Rapids, MI
7/31 Jackson, MS

Opening a Restaurant: Before You Start Cooking . . .

- 7/10 St. Louis, MO
7/12 Minneapolis, MN
7/23 San Mateo, CA

Operational Analysis

- 6/19-20 Milwaukee, WI
8/6-7 Seattle, WA

The Pantry: Prep for Profit

- 7/24 Denver, CO
7/26 Portland, OR
7/31 Indianapolis, IN

Basic Purchasing

- 6/20 Chicago, IL
6/25 Boston, MA

Soups and Sauces

- 6/20 Milwaukee, WI

Basic Supervision in Foodservice

- 6/12 Los Angeles, CA
6/26 Boston, MA

Wine: Sales and Merchandising

- 6/11 Denver, CO
6/28 San Diego, CA

NRA Conferences

- 8/26-29 National Conference on Marketing, Advertising and Promotions, Long Beach, CA
9/29-10/3 Ninth Annual California Wine Workshop, Sonoma, CA
10/28-31 National Conference on Catering, Washington, DC

For more information, contact:

NRA Education Programs
311 First Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20001
800-424-5156

STUDY GROUP MEETINGS

Food Service Security Council

7/15-18 Jackson Hole, WY

For more information on specific study groups, contact Philip Kralovec, (312) 853-2525.

Vol. 4 No. 5

May 1984

NRA NEWS

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT



**Seeking alternatives
to sulfite labeling**

**Showing concern
about drunk driving**

**Supporting
beneficial bills**

With this issue of the **NRA NEWS**, we are initiating the "President's Report" wherein the president of your association will report to you, each month, the major items of significance that your officers and board of directors have been addressing on your behalf. Your membership investment in the National Restaurant Association requires a periodic accounting of activities and results. This is the objective of this report. We hope you approve.

In mid-May, the NRA board convenes in Chicago for an intensive, three-day meeting. We will be reviewing a wide range of association activities, including but not limited to:

A task force on additives will report on its negotiations with the Food and Drug Administration. NRA is opposing a suggestion that foodservice operators post warnings to customers when food delivered by suppliers contains sulfiting agents.

Such a labeling requirement would provide a dangerous precedent. It could lead to a whole page in a menu or a whole wall in a restaurant covered with warnings that alarm everybody and inform no one.

The task force, chaired by NRA Director Robert S. Wood, will ask the board to approve an alternative plan. NRA will distribute information about sulfites and restaurant food to appropriate physicians. They, in turn, will warn asthmatic patients who are susceptible to these substances. The medical profession is better at handing out medical information than foodservice operators.

We serve a public that is concerned about drunk driving. NRA is continuing to develop programs to help you show your concern, too. The new management/server alcohol education seminar will be premiered during the NRA Show in Chicago. NRA also will offer it in Washington, DC, and Los Angeles in late spring, and then, through state restaurant associations, it will be presented throughout the country.

A packet of promotional ideas, table tents and posters will also be sent to you shortly. It will help you promote your alcoholic beverage service in a manner conducive to the national goal of reducing drunk driving.

The final responsibility, of course, rests with the *consumer not the server*, of alcoholic beverages. So NRA is preparing a public service announcement for radio and TV. It will remind customers about the importance of alcohol moderation when they dine out.

NRA's government relations staff is currently seeking congressional support for two bills that should benefit many of you. One bill would exempt those central kitchens which prepare food for two or more restaurants from federal inspection. With similar bills in the House of Representatives and Senate, it looks as if we may win relief from the current regulation which subjects central kitchens to the same requirements as meat packing plants.

**Doing a new kind
of research**

**Providing a forum
for foodservice**

Another bill would extend the Targeted Jobs Tax Credit (TJTC) due to expire at the end of the year. TJTC provides a tax credit of up to \$3,000 per employee for employers who hire from nine targeted categories. At least one quarter of the jobs certified for credit are in foodservice. NRA is working to ensure that any tax bill passed by Congress will contain a three-year extension.

Our NRA researchers have been studying the industry from an additional angle. The "Occasion Segmentation Study" coordinates types of occasions (business meal, celebration, date), types of restaurants (fast food, family, upscale) and restaurant attributes (price level, attentive service, salad bar). Researchers have analyzed more than 800 eating out occasions to come up with new information which should help you meet the demands of your particular clientele more effectively.

Preliminary results will be presented during the NRA Show and the complete results will be published this summer in the **NRA NEWS**.

The NRA board will review the schedule of national conferences that NRA will offer during the next fiscal year, July 1-June 30. The list is impressive:

- National Conference on Marketing, Advertising and Promotions
Long Beach, California
August 26-29, 1984
- Ninth Annual California Wine Workshop
Sonoma Valley, California
September 29-October 3, 1984
- National Conference on Catering
Washington, DC
October 28-31, 1984
- National Management Conference for Independent Operators (formerly the Tableservice Conference)
New Orleans, Louisiana
January 27-30, 1985
- National Conference on Computers in Foodservice
Las Vegas, Nevada
March 24-27, 1985.

These five conferences, added to the 316 seminars to be offered throughout the country next year, will enable you to keep abreast of the latest operational trends.

On May 21, I will complete my term as NRA President. It has been a productive year in which NRA launched new programs in nutrition, drunk driving and hospitality training—all designed to help you better serve your customers. We have raised most of the funds to send the U.S. Culinary Team to the International Culinary Competition and selected a new executive vice president. I thank you for the honor and privilege of serving as president of your association.

During the past year, 2,492 new members joined NRA. I welcome you to the most prestigious foodservice trade association in the world. Your business will be better because your membership builds a stronger association.

Sincerely,



Joe R. Lee
President and Chairman of the Board

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What people are eating when they are on the go—in planes, trains, ships and on the highways—is the focus of this month's cover story.

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Setting, Amtrak AutoTrain;
Photographer, Mark Borchelt;
Illustration, Dan Sherbo

SHORT ORDERS

NRA major medical plan combats high medical costs

Over the past decade, health care costs have risen three times faster than the overall rate of inflation. In dollars and cents, this means it now costs an average of \$237 for a day in the hospital or \$2,500 for the average cost of a typical hospital stay, according to the American Hospital Association. As these costs continue to climb, it becomes increasingly important to have adequate health insurance.

The NRA-sponsored group major medical insurance plan helps provide necessary coverage at reasonable group rates to NRA members, key employees and their families.

By combining the group purchasing power of more than 10,000 NRA members, this coverage is available at rates much lower than if similar coverage were purchased individually.

The plan provides comprehensive coverage for hospital, surgical and medical expenses with lifetime benefits of up to \$1,000,000. The plan covers a wide range of expenses, including physicians' and surgeons' fees, hospital room and board charges, prescription drugs, X-rays, lab tests and office visits.

Applicants have until July 1, 1984, to participate in the plan. The insurance rates will be determined by the deductible chosen (\$300, \$500 or \$1,000). The deductible is the amount the insured must pay each year before benefits begin. The higher the deductible, the lower the rates.

Once the deductible is paid, the plan pays 80 percent of all covered expenses until the insured has paid \$1,000 in out-of-pocket expenses. Then, the plan takes over completely to pay 100 percent of all covered expenses for the rest of the year.

For further information, contact NRA's insurance administrator Albert H. Wohlers & Co., NRA GROUP INSURANCE PLANS, 1500 Higgins Road, Park Ridge, IL 60068.



An introduction to wine

Wine can be an intimidating subject to those people who have never been properly introduced to it. The International Wine Center in New York City understands this and is offering a free weekly introductory wine tasting class.

Classes run for 75 minutes on varying days of the week starting at 6:00 p.m. They provide a quick, personal and enjoyable way to learn how to look at a wine, how to smell it and, finally, how to taste it.

Classes are held at the International Wine Center located at 144 West 55th St., New York, NY. You can reserve a place by calling 212/757-0518.

NIFI endowment fund receives \$500,000 from Coca-Cola USA

Recognizing the need of the foodservice industry to attract and effectively train tens of thousands of new employees annually, Coca-Cola USA recently made a \$500,000 contribution to the National Institute for the Foodservice Industry (NIFI) Endowment Fund.

NIFI, the industry's educational foundation, promotes industry careers, administers student scholar-

Olympic Restaurant Ethics Committee includes 3 NRA members

In order to present an image of quality and integrity during the 1984 Los Angeles Summer Olympic Games (July 28-Aug. 12), an executive board has been appointed for the Olympic Restaurant Ethics Committee.

This board consists of 11 leading southern California restaurateurs—including three NRA members: Jean Leon, chairman of the committee, La Scala, Beverly Hills; Alan Redhead, Hungry Tiger, Van Nuys; and Margie Peterson, Scandia, West Hollywood. They have helped set voluntary standards for pricing and service during the games.

These standards include

- maintaining regular menu prices
- honoring reservation requests from regular clientele whenever possible
- making an effort not to overbook
- attempting to reconfirm reservations by telephone on the day of the reservation
- extending service hours and days, if possible, without compromising standards and
- referring reservations when necessary and possible.

ships, fellowships and teacher work-study grant programs. It also develops study courses and textbooks used in more than 300 colleges, universities, industry training centers, and trade association programs. NIFI's Endowment Fund objective is to create a \$10 million permanent trust for future industry educational programs.

"NIFI now has contribution commitments totaling more than \$1.2 million—and, with funds already received this fall we can begin to expand scholarship and teacher grant awards," says Richard J. Hauer, NIFI executive director.

WASHINGTON REPORT

Tip reporting is part of 1984 tax package

If the Senate Finance Committee's \$48 billion tax package is enacted this year, the IRS will be directed to "monitor" whether the new tip reporting law affects small restaurants "that were not intended to be covered."

In the tax bill's printed explanation, the committee states that it is aware that "the definition of large food or beverage establishments may be too stringent . . . Treasury may wish to consider whether liberalized reporting and recordkeeping requirements can be pre-

scribed for the small establishments."

Coverage under the new tip reporting law has been the subject of controversy ever since Congress passed the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act (TEFRA) two years ago.

Under the law, foodservice establishments must meet new tip reporting requirements if they employ more than 10 full-time employees on a typical business day and any of those employees are tipped.

Thus the new law effectively covers nearly every full-service restaurant in the country, despite Congress' stated goal of reaching only "large" establishments.

There was some speculation at the time the law was

written that Congress meant to use a cutoff of 10 tipped employees rather



than 10 employees. But the final rules state that an employer must count all employees in his operation in determining whether he is

covered, regardless of whether they receive tips.

Industry attempts to change this rule have been fruitless, although the Senate Finance Committee did consent this spring to three technical changes, now a part of the Senate tax package before Congress. These include

- allowing an establishment to apply for a reduction in the eight percent reporting threshold to as low as two percent
- allowing employees as a group to petition the IRS for a reduction in the threshold and
- instructing the IRS to prescribe by regulations or rulings the applicable recordkeeping requirements for tipped employees.

TJTC: NRA takes its case to the House

NRA took its case for extending the Targeted Jobs Tax Credit (TJTC) to the U.S. House of Representatives last month when it testified in favor of a five-year reauthorization during a Ways and Means subcommittee hearing.

The Subcommittee on Select Revenue Measures heard testimony from the Treasury Department, Congressional Budget Office, several congressmen, employers, special interest groups and the AFL-CIO.

The credit, heavily used by the foodservice industry, will expire at the end of this year without an extension.

Tracy McManus, government programs coordinator for Morrison, Inc., a caf-

eteria and foodservice contracting company based in Mobile, AL, testified on behalf of NRA.

McManus emphasized that the credit has achieved its intended goal—increased hiring from among groups traditionally shunned by employers, such as the handicapped and the economically disadvantaged. He also noted that savings from the credit had allowed Morrison to expand, thus creating new jobs.

McManus said NRA believes a long-term extension of the credit is necessary in order to encourage more employers to use the credit and to give them enough time to implement their own TJTC programs.

U.S. Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY) appeared before the committee to garner support for his bill, H.R. 5094, which would extend the credit for five years. His bill

also would raise the ceiling on eligible wages from \$6,000 to \$10,000 per year, and it would raise the income level for determining if an individual is economically disadvantaged.

The administration has suggested that the credit be extended for just one year while a study is conducted.

A witness from the Treasury Department noted that there is currently little data on the credit. The witness also said that, based on Department of Labor statistics, participation in the program has been low, which suggests that "there could be enormous growth in the use of this subsidy program if employers checked the eligibility of workers whom they currently hire."

Treasury said it sees merit in the credit because "there may be significant social benefits achieved

from targeted workers finding employment in the private for-profit sector of the economy. These social benefits include gaining economic self-sufficiency for individuals who have been dependent on welfare or for young persons from economically disadvantaged families who may never become part of the mainstream labor force if they are not employed at an early age."

But the AFL-CIO claimed that there "is no evidence that the program has generated any new jobs. Rather, evidence shows that employers received windfall tax benefits for doing what they would have done anyway."

NRA disagrees. NRA is working with a number of employer groups to include the Senate Finance Committee three-year extension as part of any final tax.

NRA fact sheet says drunk driving not related to drinking age

Research has *not* demonstrated that changing the drinking age has a significant effect on alcohol-related traffic accidents, according to an NRA-prepared fact sheet circulated on Capitol Hill.

The fact sheet, which cites a number of studies, was developed to support the association's position that federal legislation to raise the drinking age will not solve the problem of drunk driving.

Legislation that would raise the drinking age to 21 is now under consideration in both houses of Congress. A House bill (H.R. 3870), introduced by James Florio (D-NJ), has been reported

out by the House Energy and Commerce Committee and is now pending before the Rules Committee.

A companion Senate measure (S. 1948), introduced by Richard Lugar (R-IN), has not been taken up at the committee level. Both bills would establish a minimum purchasing age of 21 and require enforcement by the Commerce Department.

NRA believes such legislation would violate the 21st Amendment, which repealed Prohibition and gave the states exclusive authority to regulate alcohol. But beyond the constitutional argument, and perhaps more fundamental to the issue of drunk driving, is the question of whether raising the drinking age actually reduces the incidence of driving while intoxicated.

Although public interest groups argue that raising the drinking age has resulted in a reduction in

drunk driving, close scrutiny of the data does not bear this out.

NRA has found that research in this area does not establish a clear cause and effect relationship between the drinking age and alcohol-related crashes, and it does not adequately address a number of underlying variables that affect traffic accidents.

One review of the research concludes that "analyses reveal no consistent or predictable pattern of changing highway crash involvement attributable to raising the [purchase] age."

Studies that attribute a decrease in traffic accidents to an increase in the drinking age generally have not taken into account such factors as increases in gasoline prices, number of miles driven, changes in DWI enforcement, increased public awareness programs and changes in police reporting practices.

Other evidence demonstrates that there are vast year-to-year changes in the number of traffic fatalities, regardless of whether the drinking age has been changed.

Also, studies have shown that teenagers as a group are less likely than individuals in their twenties and thirties to be involved in alcohol-related fatal accidents.

It has also been demonstrated that raising the drinking age does not discourage teens from drinking. When the drinking age has been raised, there has been no corresponding decline in alcoholic beverage sales.

NRA believes that increased enforcement of DWI laws and stiffer penalties, coupled with increased public education, are appropriate and effective ways of curbing drunk driving.

These policies would not needlessly penalize young Americans and, according to the National Bureau of Economic Research, could result in reduced drunk driving.

To help stop drunk driving, NRA has begun its own alcohol awareness program to encourage practices in restaurants and taverns that will reduce the likelihood of overconsumption and drunk driving.

NRA plans workshops to teach foodservice operators about state liquor laws, the physical effects of alcohol, the visible signs of overconsumption and methods of preventing intoxication.

It is also participating in the Licensed Beverage Information Council's "Friends don't let friends drive drunk" campaign, has pledged support to Students Against Driving Drunk (SADD) and will jointly sponsor projects with Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD).

Central kitchen legislation moves forward

NRA efforts to exempt restaurant central kitchens from burdensome federal inspection moved forward in late March. House Agriculture Committee Chairman Kika de la Garza (D-TX) joined with members of the Senate Agriculture Committee in sponsoring legislation to remove federal meat and poultry inspection requirements from restaurant central kitchens.

De la Garza's bill, H.R. 5223, would exempt from inspection central kitchens that prepare ready-to-eat food for sale to consumers at restaurants owned or operated by the same company. The bill would not exempt those central kitchens that cook food to be sold in packaged form.

The bill has the support

of the ranking Republican on the committee, Edward R. Madigan (R-IL), as well as Majority Whip Thomas Foley (D-WA) and committee members James M. Jeffords (R-VT) and Tom Harkin (D-IA). Rep. Ike Andrews (D-NC) is a sponsor also.

The bill is nearly identical to legislation (S. 2256) introduced in the Senate by Sen. Walter Huddleston (D-KY), ranking Democrat on the Senate Agriculture Committee.

Under current law, a restaurant central kitchen that distributes food products to two or more restaurants must meet the same inspection requirements as large meat-packing plants. NRA has argued for several years now that central kitchens

should be treated the same as restaurants, which are exempt from the Federal Meat and Poultry Inspection Acts.

State and local health and sanitation codes sufficiently protect restaurant patrons, NRA contends, and requiring a restaurant to meet duplicative federal requirements adds to costs.

With the backing of influential members of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees, NRA hopes that the de la Garza and Huddleston measures will move forward quickly. NRA members can help by contacting their congressman and senators and asking them to support H.R. 5223 and S. 2256.



James Coyne

James Coyne discusses the Office of Private Sector Initiatives

When Ronald Reagan became President, he established an Office of Private Sector Initiatives in the White House because he believed that local businesses and community agencies could work together to solve some of America's social and economic problems.

Out of this partnership have come urban revitalization projects, programs to train the hard-to-employ and instruction in a wide range of vocational and business skills.

Because NRA and many of its members have long been involved in the efforts the White House is now encouraging, **NRA NEWS** talked with former Congressman James K. Coyne, the President's special assistant for private sector initiatives, to learn more about how the foodservice industry can become involved in the office's activities.

NRA NEWS: What led President Reagan to believe that the private sector is needed to help solve some of our national problems?

COYNE: The President decided to set up the office

because he felt that Americans have become mesmerized with the false belief that whatever the problem is there is only one solution—more federal programs.

One of the reasons for this impression is that we have never involved all parts of society in the problem-solving process. We have not built a partnership between business, labor institutions, non-profit groups, schools and government. Whether it's a problem like hunger, education, highway safety, drug abuse or health care for the elderly, we've falsely focused on just government programs as a solution.

President Reagan created this office to build the kind of partnership I'm talking about.

NRA NEWS: What are some of the areas where your office sees the greatest need for private sector involvement?

COYNE: We deal with a full range of issues from helping the homeless and the hungry to training displaced workers—just about anything where the private sector can make a difference.

One way of getting involved is by participating in trade associations. Trade associations are no longer just narrow, defensive groups out to protect their members from government interference and higher taxes. Today, they accept more responsibility for challenges facing our country. So we've been working quite a bit with various trade organizations.

Major corporations, too, have a devoted a lot of resources to community involvement. The corporations realize that these activities will increase their visibility—and that's good for business—but they're principally doing it because they understand that as a

member of society they have responsibilities.

NRA NEWS: What about the foodservice industry?

What can it do to help?

COYNE: Who can do a better job of dealing with hunger in our society than the food industry? Whether it's restaurants, food distributors or grocery stores, these are the kinds of groups our office would like to see trying to tackle this problem.

I'd love to see the entire restaurant industry develop an initiative to provide food—surplus food perhaps—to the nation's hungry. Your industry has such an expertise and understanding of feeding people that with the producers, distributors and government you could become a real force in feeding the hungry. If fast food chains can sell billions of hamburgers a year, at such a low cost, they could really help those people who fall through the cracks of federal support.

Education is another important area where restaurants can help. There are many restaurants that have gone to the local school system and said, "We want to teach your kids about the restaurant profession." And so they bring classes into restaurants and teach them about restaurant management. They establish an awareness about the industry that might not have existed before.

We call this program "adopt-a-school" because business forms a long-term partnership with a school, providing expertise, tutoring, financial support, surplus or donated equipment, curriculum advice, support for outstanding teachers, field trips or courses on technical subjects that aren't normally taught. Just a one-day course on the business of feeding America would be something a res-

taurant could do.

One thing we're trying to get across is that everyone, every business, has some responsibility for educating our children. We can't afford to leave education to a small ivory tower if we're going to deal with the challenge of immigration or changing technology. Just look at restaurants—all the technological changes that have occurred in the last 10 years. The young people have got to stay on top of that technology.

I've talked to restaurant owners who are furious about how much our education system has declined in the last 20 years. They tell me that high school graduates apply for jobs who can't even add up a check without making mistakes. They complain that these graduates are not interested in their work and don't understand the responsibility of showing up for work each day. If these restaurateurs are aware of the problem, then they've got to get involved and become part of the solution.

NRA NEWS: Suppose a restaurateur wants to help. How does he get involved?

COYNE: I've had people call from all over the country and say, "I don't know quite what to do." Our office acts as a kind of matchmaker. We try to connect callers with a non-profit group, a school superintendent, a local government official, someone we know who can help them get started. We act as facilitators.

—Jay Morris

Editor's Note: For more information on how you can help, contact the Office of Private Sector Initiatives, (202) 456-6676. Also see the story on page 11, which describes how restaurateurs are extending a helping hand to the community.

THE BOARD ROOM

Machus addresses industry issues

In preparation for a busy year of speaking engagements and coast-to-coast travel, NRA President-elect Harris Machus recently addressed members of the Utah and Oklahoma restaurant associations on industry trends and issues of vital concern to foodservice.

On April 18 Machus told the board of directors of the Oklahoma Restaurant Association, "By the end of the decade, this country's dietary habits will be entirely transformed. Either we will respond to these changes or we will be out of business."

"Today's consumers don't just eat food: They think about it, read about it

and talk about it. They are interested in new foods, such as American regional cuisine and ethnic cuisine. Yet they are concerned about moderation—both because of health and the preoccupation with reducing drunk driving. . . .

"Good business sense and a sense of social responsibility suggest that we take the wants of these people into consideration as we plan our menus."

On the issue of public concern about preservatives and additives, Machus said, "Our customers are deeply concerned about additives and preservatives."

"NRA would like to find a way to warn asthmatics about the danger sulfites might pose to them without alarming the rest of our guests. We believe the best

route is through the physician. NRA is prepared to supply the allergists and lung doctors, who treat asthmatics, with the proper brochures and pamphlets."

On the subject of alcohol awareness and the responsibility for drunken driving Machus said, "We believe that the ultimate responsibility for accidents caused by drunk drivers lies with the consumer, not the server of alcoholic beverages. However, if the foodservice companies that serve alcoholic beverages train their staff and introduce prudent practices and promotion, we will reduce the pressure to regulate the industry further. And, perhaps more importantly, we will show our customers that we are responsive to their concerns."

Machus honored by MSU's HRI School

NRA's President-elect Harris O. Machus, president and owner of Harris O. Machus Enterprises, Inc., in Birmingham, MI, will be a guest of honor at the 32nd annual reunion of Michigan State University's (MSU) School of Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Management (HRI). More than 600 guests, including MSU and HRI graduates and members of the foodservice industry, are expected to attend the reunion during the NRA Show at the Hyatt Regency Chicago on Sunday, May 20, 1984 at 6:00 p.m.

Machus, a graduate of Michigan State University, is the first non-HRI graduate to be honored by the foodservice school in its 32-year history. According to a spokesman for the Alumni Association and the School of Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Management, Machus, who "epitomizes success in the industry," has been singled out for his "strong support of HRI and considerable contributions to foodservice." In addition to monetary support, Harris O. Machus Enterprises, Inc., participates in the school's intern program which places 100 top students in management training positions in foodservice. Members of the foodservice industry are invited to attend the 32nd annual reunion. Tickets for the affair, which includes a buffet dinner, are \$25 and can be purchased at the door.

—Dorothy Dee

Balestreri praises collective action

NRA Treasurer Ted Balestreri, president and co-owner of the Sardine Factory in Monterey, CA, praised the benefits of collective action through membership in NRA and state restaurant associations at the Pacific International Convention in Seattle, WA, on April 8.

Balestreri told the 200 foodservice professionals assembled for the convention, "Business is good right now. The recession is over. This is our second year of strong growth. But—we still have our problems."

"The government faces a huge deficit. New tax bills have provisions aimed

squarely at us. Our customers demand value for the dollar and a high standard of hospitality. At the same time, they are concerned about nutrition and drunk driving. They want us to respond.

"Through the NRA and our state associations, we are responding to these challenges. Our grassroots political outreach can make our representatives listen. NRA's Hospitality Program will be brought to your region. Its alcohol awareness program will be brought to you through the state associations. These programs will help us respond to the demands of our customers."

"Our associations help us deal collectively with problems we cannot handle alone. Participating in their activities shows good business sense."

NRA directors promote industry

NRA directors Stephen Elmont, president of Creative Gourmet, Inc., in Boston, MA, and Michael J. Grisanti, president and co-owner of Casa Grisanti, Inc., in Louisville, KY, participated in the Third Symposium on American Cuisine at the Westin Hotel in Boston on April 3, 1984.

More than 300 food editors and writers, restaurateurs and foodservice professionals attended the symposium where Elmont participated in a panel discussion on "marketing nutrition in foodservice," and Grisanti presented a case history on the evolution of an American restaurant.

Restaurateurs give a helping hand to the community

"The only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve."
—Albert Schweitzer

It may sound simplistic for such a complicated business, but the entire essence of the foodservice industry is condensed into three words: People serving people. And the relationship between restaurateur and patron doesn't stop when the operator bids goodnight to the last customer of the evening. In recent years, an increasing social awareness has led restaurateurs to spend countless hours volunteering their time, food, resources and energies to help make their communities a better place to live.

What some operators have done is the story **NRA NEWS** would like to tell here to demonstrate that restaurateurs can help improve their neighborhoods and contribute to society.

Donating food to charities . . .

There's not a restaurateur who doesn't feel a twinge of guilt when he has to throw food away, especially when he knows there are people in the community who go hungry. A number of operators have donated excess or under par—but still edible food—to charitable organizations for distribution to the community. Others have expressed interest but fear legal liabilities. What many restaurateurs don't realize is that 36 states and the District of Columbia (see list) have state laws that limit the liability of food donors.

Yale University in New Haven, CT, and the Hotel du Pont in Wilmington, DE, are just two foodservice institutions that aid their community's hungry, eliminate needless waste and build goodwill.

Before closing for Thanksgiving, Christmas and spring break, Yale University donates its leftover food from the student dining halls to the New Haven Food Salvage Project (NHFSP). Alan Kenney, Yale's direc-



Tennis star Jimmy Connors, a goodwill ambassador from the sport of tennis to Ronald McDonald Houses all over the world, takes time out of his busy tournament schedule to visit the Ronald McDonald House in Chicago.

tor of dining halls, explains that the school now contributes \$200 to \$400 worth of food before each break that otherwise would be thrown away. "Our milk comes in six-gallon dispensers. Full ones can go back to the dairy, but the remnants of open dispensers used to be thrown down the sink before we contributed to NHFSP. Other perishable items we donate include lettuce, cottage cheese and yogurt. NHFSP picks up the food and uses it for food wagons and soup kitchens in the New Haven area."

The New Haven Food Salvage Project is a member of the Chicago-based national food bank network, Second Harvest. Restaurateurs in any part of the country can find out where to donate food by contacting Second Harvest at (312) 341-1301. A regional coordinator in the caller's

area will make arrangements for pick up and delivery.

The Hotel du Pont in Wilmington, DE, also makes productive use of leftover food that would otherwise be thrown away. It began its contribution to the city's needy when the hotel held a Thursday brunch. Leftover food from that brunch was regularly given to Brother Ronald Giannone of the Ministry of Caring in Wilmington. Although the brunch is now discontinued, the Hotel du Pont still stays in touch with the Ministry of Caring. When the hotel recently received outside bread samples—much more than it needed—Brother Giannone received the surplus. "We are very grateful for anything we receive. Our need is great and growing steadily. In 1980, we served 39,212 meals, and in 1983 the number increased to 110,831," laments Giannone.

Restaurateurs to the rescue . . .

Often restaurateurs pitch in during catastrophes. This "compassion in action" has let the public know that restaurant operators care.

Carl Karcher Enterprises (CKE), headquartered in Anaheim, CA, heard about the victims of the Coalinga earthquake last May. CKE contacted the Red Cross and asked how they could help. By working together with their distribution, purchasing, manufacturing and corporate affairs offices and soliciting product donations from their vendors, CKE was able to round up 30,000 pounds of food for these earthquake victims. "We've had a disaster aid policy for some time," explained Manager of Corporate Communications Louise Garver. "We consider aid like this a natural extension of our community-related efforts."

Sometimes the catastrophe is a threatened institution. A child abuse center in Nashville, TN, lost its funding and was on the verge of having to close its doors when Garcia's of Scottsdale stepped in. Not only was the company able to raise several thousand dollars for the center but it also obtained television news coverage on every news program in Nashville so that other individuals or companies could help. "We felt great about this. That child abuse center covers a large area and performs a vital community service. We were delighted to help keep it operating," reports Sharon Spaulding, public relations manager for Garcia's.

Children are also the focus of a major project spearheaded by the McDonald's Corporation.

"The house that love built" . . .

By year's end, there will be more than 65 Ronald McDonald Houses throughout the U.S., Canada and Sydney, Australia. Appropriately named "The house that love built," each Ronald McDonald House provides temporary residences for families of children being treated for serious illnesses at nearby hospitals. For families traveling great distances to receive specialized medical care, the house eliminates costly hotel bills by providing a secure place to stay. Additional strength and stability are received from other resident families in similar situations.

The first Ronald McDonald House



Many bars across the country participate in a fundraiser, called the Ugliest Bartenders Contest, to help fight multiple sclerosis.

opened on Oct. 15, 1974, as the result of the dedicated efforts of Fred Hill, a former Philadelphia Eagles football player. After Hill's young daughter Kim was treated for leukemia, Hill

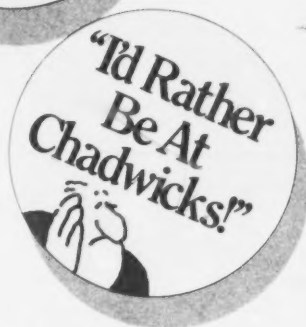
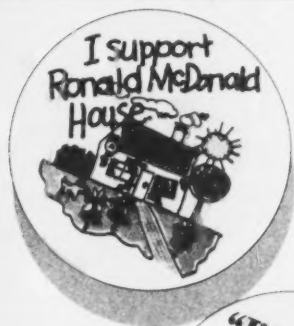
and his teammates decided to do something to benefit families of children who were hospitalized. Kim's physician suggested a "home-away-from-home" facility near the hospital. The Eagles contacted the Philadelphia-area McDonald's franchisees for help. These restaurateurs joined the Eagles to create the first Ronald McDonald House by conducting in-store milkshake promotions to raise a large part of the funds needed to purchase and renovate a seven-bedroom row house. Since then, each house always involves local McDonald's restaurants as major initial fundraisers as well as a national umbrella organization that assists with local efforts.

Each Ronald McDonald House is different. Created by a team of concerned citizens to meet the needs of their community, the facility is owned and operated by a local not-for-profit organization. Members and directors are unpaid volunteers. Many local and national companies volunteer support.

To acquire and develop each Ronald McDonald House costs between \$100,000 to more than

State laws limiting liability of food donors

Alabama	Missouri
Arizona	Montana
Arkansas	Nebraska
California	Nevada
Colorado	New Mexico
District of Columbia	New York
Florida	North Carolina
Georgia	Ohio
Hawaii	Oklahoma
Idaho	Oregon
Illinois	Pennsylvania
Indiana	South Carolina
Iowa	South Dakota
Kentucky	Tennessee
Louisiana	Texas
Maine	Utah
Maryland	Virginia
Minnesota	Washington
	Wyoming



Proceeds from the sale of restaurant buttons are sometimes donated to charities.



This month Ramada Inns is holding a "tropicano casino night" benefit for the Easter Seals. The main attraction: the Folies Bergere.

\$2,000,000 per project. Although most houses are renovations, some are new constructions when there are no suitable existing structures.

Families using a Ronald McDonald House make donations ranging from \$5 to \$15 per day if they can afford it. These fees pay for most of the continuing operating costs.

An anniversary thank you . . .

Some restaurateurs set aside a day or two each year to lend their hands to the community.

Cafe Riggio in San Francisco, CA, commemorated its fourth and fifth anniversaries by joining forces with its suppliers and the Glide Memorial Church's emergency human services program to provide an elegant lunch for 850 needy people.

Cafe Riggio's suppliers provided 13 cases of pint-size cartons of milk, four cases of chickens, two cases of tortellini shells, 50 loaves of sour-dough French bread and a substantial discount on five cases of spumoni. The result was a gourmet meal of chicken marsala, tortellini with meat sauce, Italian salad, French bread,

spumoni and milk, prepared by the chefs of Cafe Riggio.

Helping volunteers . . .

Helping to feed volunteers is another way to spread goodwill. For the third consecutive year, Bacino's Stuffed Pizza Restaurant in Chicago, IL, has donated 100 stuffed pizzas to feed

"Restaurateurs are very influential leaders in society. When they tell the community they care about a project, the rest of the community follows."

volunteers and staff during a two-day public television fundraiser. As Dan Bacin puts it: "I believe in this organization. The workers are volunteering their time and effort to a good community cause, and they have to eat." Bacino's provides similar pizza give-

aways to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's fundraiser.

The Peasant Restaurants, a nine-unit corporation headquartered in Atlanta, GA, hosted one of the largest volunteer expos in Atlanta last October in conjunction with AT&T Communications, Colony Square and the United Way's Volunteer Resource Center. The purpose was to acquaint the general public with approximately 70 non-profit area organizations and the emphasis was on recruiting volunteers. In just a two-day period, 926 volunteers were recruited.

"This volunteer expo was a way to expand community relations and help a lot of non-profit organizations. We were overwhelmed with the success of the program. An event like this really makes you feel like you've made a difference in the quality of society. All of the organizations are helped, and the people who volunteer also benefit since many of them are senior citizens who need a way to feel productive," says Leigh Bonnelle, director of public relations.

Curing illnesses through monetary contributions . . .

Millions and millions of dollars are needed to research and find cures for diseases that plague our nation.

Many restaurateurs have found that the best way to help make a significant contribution to a cause is to join in group fundraisers.

Multiple Sclerosis

Many bars across the country participate in a fundraiser to help fight multiple sclerosis (MS). Called the Ugliest Bartenders' Contest, the contest has nothing to do with physical appeal. The slogan is "Do something beautiful, fight an ugly disease—Multiple sclerosis." This contest originated at an MS chapter in Ohio and grew into a national program with the Miller Brewing Co. as the major sponsor. Last year the contest generated \$110,000 in the District of Columbia, Maryland and Northern Virginia area alone.

Bars were chosen as focal points because MS is a disease that strikes individuals between the ages of 18 and 45—the age range of most bar customers.

In the District of Columbia, Maryland and Northern Virginia area approximately 150 bars compete for the

"ugliest bartender" award. Each bar chooses one bartender who scrambles to get votes during a four-week period in the fall. Each vote requires a 25-cent contribution to MS. One bartender sat on a roof for 24 hours to raise about \$4,000 in votes.

Many radio stations visit the bars and bring a celebrity to help the contest along. The winners are announced at an awards ceremony and on local television and radio stations.

The Market Inn in Washington, DC, won the Ugliest Bartenders Contest for the last two years. In 1983, this restaurant alone collected \$12,000 for MS. Half of these proceeds came from a walk-a-thon where customers and businesses pledged money for employees who walked for MS. The other half came from events held at the inn.

Cystic Fibrosis

Garcia's of Scottsdale, a 29-unit chain headquartered in Scottsdale, AZ, adopted the Cystic Fibrosis (CF) Foundation as its corporate charity in 1981 when it discovered that the vice president of operations' son had the disease. Since that time, Garcia's has gone all out to educate the public and to involve all its employees in raising funds for this charity. Vice President of Marketing Steve Maxwell explains, "If your managers are involved in community activities, then customers come to think of your establishment as a restaurant rather than as a building that has 9,000 sq. ft. where you can go to eat. It gives customers a better reason to have a positive feeling toward you." Last year, Garcia's raised \$100,000 for CF. This year, their goal is \$150,000.

Garcia's has organized a number of special fundraising events:

- **a margaritas for CF day.** On this day, all proceeds from margarita sales—the biggest money-maker at the restaurant—go to CF. In 1983, the event raised \$67,000.

- **selling rosebushes** during the planting season for \$10 each. Half the proceeds go to CF.

- **a pre-opening benefit dinner** for each new Garcia's unit. Each benefit yields about \$4,600 to the local chapter of the CF Foundation. "We turn the restaurant over to the local chapter of the CFF for the evening," says Sharon Spaulding, public relations director.



The cast of NBC's "Cheers" was so enthusiastic about the work of Washington's Bartenders' Ball Foundation that they filmed a public service announcement on location in Los Angeles.

What Garcia's gets from all these generous contributions is a tremendous amount of goodwill. Garcia's Steve Maxwell says sometimes this goodwill is extremely touching: "Last year, we got a thank you letter from parents in Denver who read about CF on our table tent on margarita day.

"An event like this really makes you feel like you've made a difference in the quality of society."

The symptoms sounded like what their daughter was experiencing. They took her to a doctor, and it was diagnosed as CF. Although there is no cure for the disease, early detection can mean a much easier time for the child. One letter like that—just one—makes all of our efforts worthwhile."

Special Olympics

Chadwick's, a three-unit operation in the Washington, DC area, hosted a basketball party for the Special Olympics last September and donated 20 percent of the proceeds to the Washington area Special Olympics.

Since that event, Chadwick's has

developed good rapport with Special Olympics and is now donating the proceeds of a promotional button that says, "I'd rather be at Chadwick's!" to the organization.

"Although we can't forget that our main purpose is to stay in business and not run charity events, there's no reason not to contribute when you can. It's actually good for business. Sales increase on fundraising nights. I love to write the checks to charity," says Owner Tom Russo.

Easter Seals

Ramada Inns, Inc., headquartered in Phoenix, AZ, has chosen Easter Seals as its corporate charity because "it has a chapter in almost every city. It is a high quality organization and one we believe in," maintains Andrea Trengove, manager of community affairs for Ramada. "Customers who have contributed can see the good of their money in their own community. In 1983, Ramada donated \$468,226 to Easter Seals and hopes to donate \$500,000 in 1984. The money is raised in many different ways: races, dances, auctions and so forth.

One of the things Ramada Inns is doing to raise the corporate goal in Phoenix is holding a "tropicano casino night" on May 12. Ramada owns the Tropicana Hotel in Las Vegas.

NV, where the Folies Bergere is performed. "It's a real treat for the people of Phoenix because the Folies Bergere are only held in two places in the world: Paris, France, and Las Vegas. We're hoping to collect \$50,000 for the Phoenix Chapter of Easter Seals on that one night," speculates Trengove.

Even Ramada Inns' large contributions need to be supplemented, and restaurateurs all over the country add what they can to the charity by combining their efforts.

The South Carolina Restaurant Association, co-sponsors an annual fundraiser for the Easter Seals with the state's law enforcement officers.

The association designates Good Friday as B.A.C. Coffee Day, and operators sell buttons that say "Buck-A-Cup/Brace-A-Child." These buttons cost one dollar each and entitle the wearer to free coffee all day long. Since the campaign began in 1952, more than \$2.5 million has been raised for the Easter Seals Society. In 1983, the campaign broke all previous records by raising \$231,566.

Restaurateurs band together in their communities . . .

The Santa Monica Bay Area Association, which is a chapter of the California Restaurant Association, organized a 30-restaurant eat-in to benefit the Salvation Army in Santa Monica and Torrance. This Taste of the Santa Monica Bay, as it is called, began in 1982 when 22 restaurants grouped together to raise \$4,500 for the Salvation Army. In 1983, the event grew to 30 restaurants and raised \$6,000. The tickets were \$7.50 in 1982 and \$10 in 1983 for an all-you-can-eat buffet.

Gerry Breitbart, director of chapter relations and membership services for the California Restaurant Association, estimates that such an event costs the restaurants between \$600 to \$1,000—considering food and labor—for about three hours exposure to the community. "This probably generates—through media coverage—about \$10,000 worth of goodwill. It's an excellent return on investment, and I encourage restaurants to get involved in this kind of high visibility community-minded event," says Breitbart.

Another reason Breitbart believes restaurateurs should get involved in community activities is that "every businessman has the responsibility to

ensure that the community in which he operates stays economically viable. You only earn a good living by giving back to the community. It's really an investment in your future."

New York City restaurateurs also have a success story in their Citymeals on Wheels program.

In a five-month period, American Express, Sugar Foods and 300 New

York restaurants helped Citymeals on Wheels raise more than \$900,000 to bring meals to older people. Translated from dollars to meals, this means one-quarter million more meals will be available for Saturday, Sunday and holiday delivery to homebound and elderly people who would not otherwise have had a meal.

"Restaurateurs are very influential leaders in society. When they tell the community they care about a project, the rest of the community follows. The impact is tremendous," says Marcia Stein, director of Citymeals on Wheels. That is why the Administration on Aging in Washington, DC, has set aside money to produce a handbook that should help other communities repeat the success of New York's Citymeals on Wheels program.

In six years, the Bartenders' Ball of Washington, DC, has raised \$310,000 for charity and turned itself into one of the hottest black-tie events in the nation's capital. Restaurant owners, purveyors, distributors and suppliers donate their time and products to make this a sell-out event. This year, the cast of "Cheers," a television program that takes place in a Boston bar, donated a free public service announcement endorsing the ball.

During the ball's first three years, all the money raised was given to the Leukemia Society. In 1982, the beneficiaries included the Leukemia Society as well as five area charities. In 1983 and 1984, all proceeds benefited 10 locally-based charitable institutions. The contributions came from ticket sales of \$65 each, which entitled the holder to a gourmet meal and a night of entertainment. Susan Brackna, public relations manager for the ball, told **NRA NEWS** that "restaurant people don't really have a lot of opportunity to socialize with each other. This ball gives them the chance. The ball is fantastic fun and a great fundraiser for the community."

A final salute . . .

Foodservice operators have done much to extend a helping hand to their communities. No program is too small to say, "We care about you." Whether it is donating surplus food to a local food bank or raising thousands of dollars in a national campaign, socially-minded programs let the public know that the foodservice industry cares about people. □

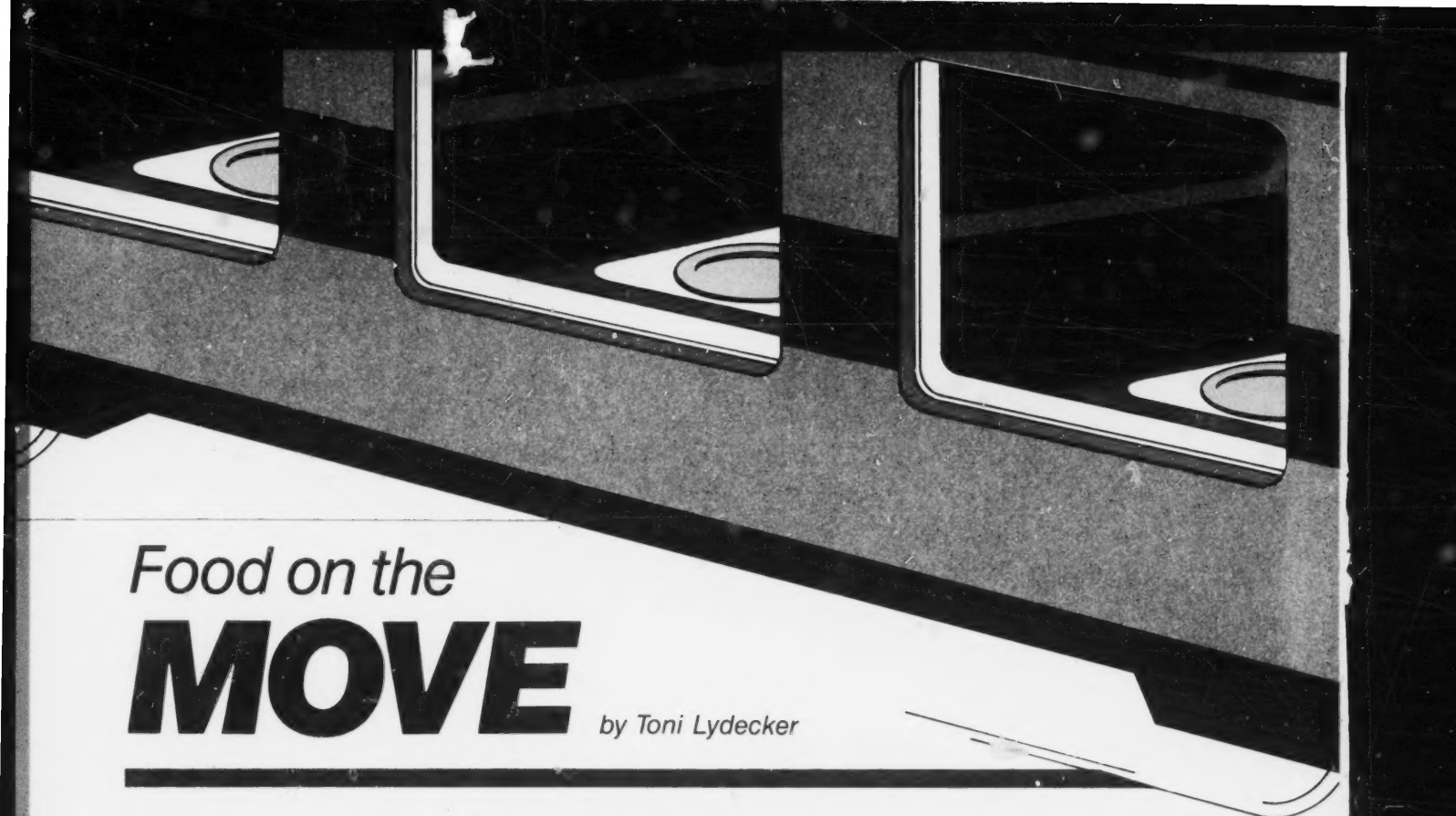
Restaurateurs hire the handicapped

According to an NRA survey in the fiscal year ending July, 1983, 5,000 impaired persons were placed in foodservice jobs. By hiring the handicapped, foodservice operators offer these individuals a chance to establish self-sufficiency and self-esteem and to become productive members of society.

Windsor House in Windsor, CT, is one establishment that employs four retarded workers. Owner Chuck Rocci told **NRA NEWS** that friends brought his attention to this community need when they had a retarded child and became active in a group to help retarded individuals. Windsor House decided to get involved by hiring retarded workers. That was eight years ago. Rocci describes the quality of work performed by handicapped workers as excellent but adds that "you need an intermediary to provide some direction because each retarded person's potential is different. You need to know what job will suit an individual's capability."

"What's the advantage?" **NRA NEWS** asked. "If you put a dollar and cent value on it, there's probably no advantage," says Rocci, "but we don't do this for a dollar and cent value. We live in this community and these people are our neighbors. That's reason enough."

For more information on how you can help the handicapped, contact Brother Philip Nelán, NRA human resources department, 311 First St., N.W., Washington, DC 20001; (800) 424-5156.



Food on the **MOVE**

by Toni Lydecker

Food and drink are not quite the same when consumed on the move. In Graham Greene's novel *The Orient Express*, a veteran traveller calls it a waste of money to buy a good wine aboard a train "for no bouquet could survive the continuous tremor." And Air India's Howard Schultz swears, "There's no such thing as a great cup of coffee on an airplane" (because of the altitude, water boils at a lower temperature, and the coffee does not brew properly). Although their observations may fall more in the realm of psychology than objective fact, the truth is that figuring out what people want to eat while on the move is not easy.

Yet the incentive for transportation companies to please people with their food is very high. Marriott Corporation, a leading airline caterer, provided more than 93 million meals to passengers in 1983. Food sales for Amtrak, the national passenger rail service, are expected to total about \$40 million this year. Cruise ships are also large-volume operations, serving meals to as many as 1,500 passengers per trip. Clearly, the company that does not use food as an active marketing tool is likely to lose passengers.

"In the airline industry as a whole,

the trend has been to lighter food and a better presentation, rather than something unidentifiable covered with gravy," comments Alex Morton, publisher of *Airline & Travel Food Magazine*, published in Miami Springs, FL.

Fresh approaches . . .

For companies that choose to head in this direction, Midway Airlines can serve as a model. The reason is that Midway, a new business-class flight service based in Chicago, IL, provides only foods that taste best when eaten at room temperature or slightly below. Although the airline decided against in-flight ovens for budgetary reasons, the airline's consumer research supports the decision: It showed that passengers hate being served lukewarm food that was intended to be hot.

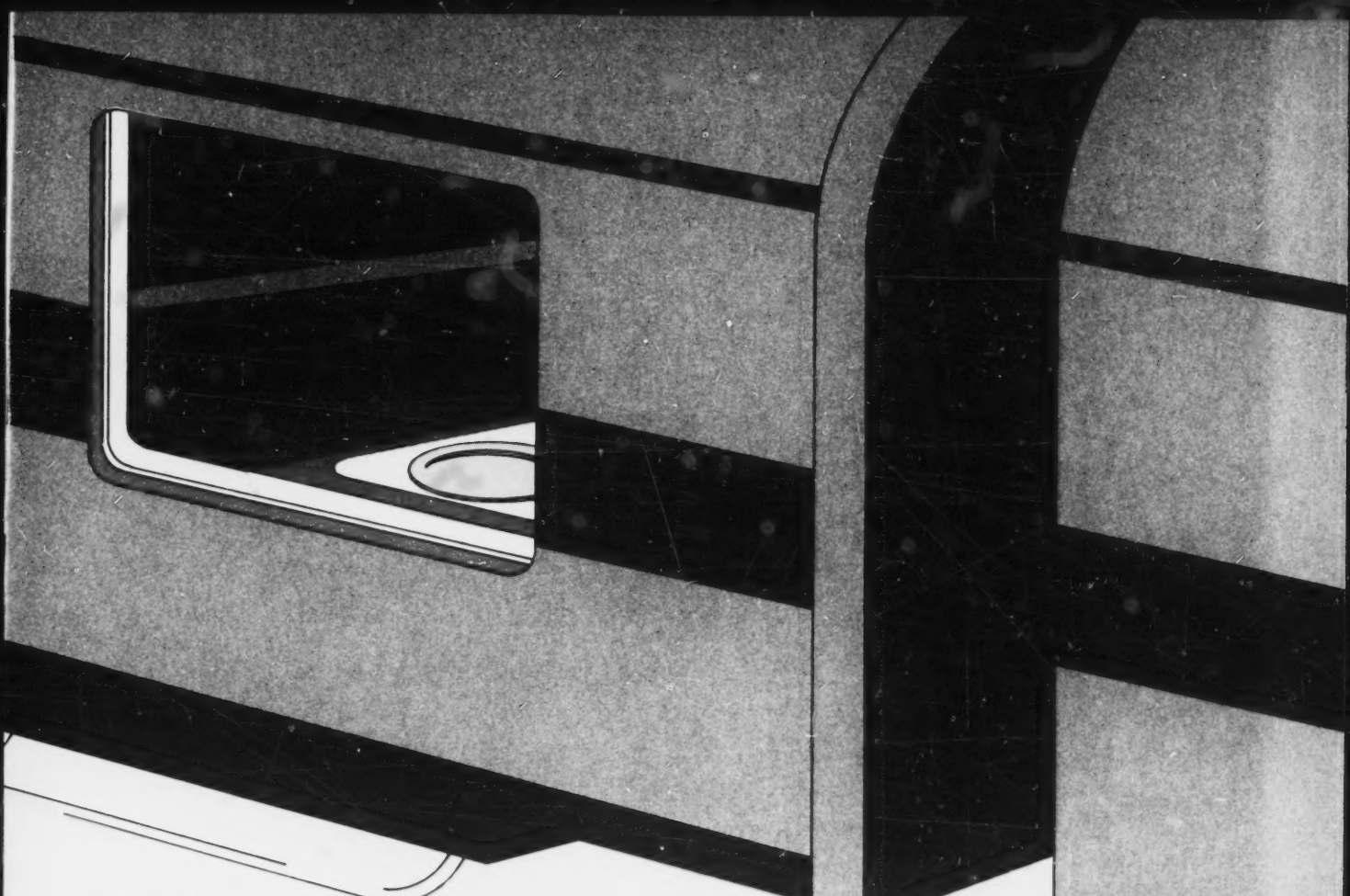
On Midway, passengers eat a bran muffin or croissant and fresh fruit for breakfast; at lunchtime, it's croissants stuffed with fillings, such as turkey or roast beef; and sliced turkey, ham or roast beef is the meat on the "light dinner" tray. A fresh vegetable or fruit accompanies both lunch and dinner, and complimentary wine is included. Lunch and dinner always close with something sweet.

Visual appeal contributes to the food's popularity, according to Mid-

way's Public Relations Director Louise Gilliam: "Our food is very labor intensive because we take the time to make it look attractive. All the fruit is cut by hand, and there is usually a nice garnish, such as a carrot curl or a carved onion." The colors of the food stand out against the shiny black surface of the serving box.

Although its food and labor costs are about the same as those of other airlines, Midway eliminates the need for a menu and complicated service by giving everyone the same meal.

The formula that has worked so well for Midway is not a natural for every airline, however. United Airlines, for example, tested cold entrees, such as seafood or fruit salads, on several of its routes. Protests poured in, especially from recreational travellers. "People who don't travel all the time are looking for entertainment when they get on an airplane. Many of them want the fattening sauces and sweet things they wouldn't touch at home," says Jan Masek, staff representative for food and beverage planning. Although a lighter lunch is acceptable to United's passengers, dinner does not find an enthusiastic response unless it is a hot, ample meat-and-potatoes meal. Fruit and cheese for dessert were so



unpopular that the airline returned quickly to sweets. United continues to serve its TLC (Traveller's Lighter Choice) meal but only to passengers who request it in advance.

Air India stimulates interest in its food by offering international flight passengers a minimum of three meal selections. First-class passengers choose among seven entrees.

The colorful menus include vegetarian and nonvegetarian versions of both Indian and Western entrees. All of the food is prepared in a large flight kitchen at Kennedy International Airport in New York shortly before takeoff; the curries travel particularly well because they reheat without loss of quality.

Contrary to the common impression that all airline meals come from a freezer, many are prepared fresh, flash-cooled and then warmed in ovens on the airplane. The point of origin may be a flight kitchen right in the airport or a vendor miles away. Both airplanes and trains are switching from microwaves to convection ovens because the food suffers less deterioration in quality if warmed in

this way. When several hours will elapse before the food is eaten, dry ice is often used to retard spoilage.

Tracking train food . . .

As with the airlines, food on trains has had its ups and downs. Ordered by the U.S. Congress several years ago to eliminate a huge annual deficit for its food and beverage service, Amtrak complied by switching entirely to fast food, none of which was prepared on board. Then the passenger rail service acquired a new president, W. Graham Claytor, Jr. He sampled one of Amtrak's reheated sandwiches and, comparing it to wet paper towels, demanded immediate improvements.

In the 18 months since then, Amtrak has restored full-service dinners on its long-distance routes; breakfasts are cooked to order, and about half of the lunch and dinner offerings are prepared on the train. Chefs are encouraged to create regional variations of basic recipes. For example, baked red snapper may be the "fisherman's catch" on the New York to Florida route, while on the

Crescent run between Atlanta and New Orleans, the kitchen may prepare the fish in Creole fashion.

Most travellers on shorter trips must continue to eat snack bar fare prepared before the train departs, but even here some changes for the better are apparent. Calzone, a type of folded-over pizza, has become a popular menu item, and a better grade of ice cream is being served. On some lines, there is a club car—Amtrak's version of first class—where passengers can choose among several freshly made salads and sandwiches.

Despite the improvements, Amtrak spokesman John McLeod says, "I don't think the days of finger bowls or real linen napkins will ever come back." Anyone hoping for the return of luxury dining on trains, then, is apt to be disappointed—unless he chooses to follow the example of Elizabeth Taylor. When the cast of her play moved to New York, she chartered an entire car and had dinner catered by Dominique's, an upscale res-

taurant in Washington, DC.

The fads and fluctuations so typical of train and airline food have hardly touched the cruise ship industry. Here there is no question of reducing portions or quality, for food is a central interest of passengers—not a fringe benefit. A serious eater could dine nonstop on one of the ships run by Sunline Cruises, a subsidiary of the Marriott Corporation. In addition to three formal meals, the ship provides afternoon tea, a midnight buffet and unlimited snacks.

The national trend toward lighter eating has hardly disturbed the foundations of shipboard dining, but Karen Kopta, public relations manager of Sunline Cruises, sees some signs of change. Although rich entrees, such as lobster and steak, continue to reign as favorites, she reports that a few more passengers are avoiding heavily sauced foods and asking for low-calorie dishes. And Publisher Alex Morton observes that many people tend to revert to their normal patterns when the novelty of heavy eating wears off. "By the third day out, people are abandoning the formal dining room with a full meal for salads and sandwiches on deck," he says.

By special request . . .

People on special diets for religious or health reasons will probably dine less grandly on a cruise than their shipmates who are eating the standard fare. Instead of freshly prepared food, they are usually served frozen entrees taken on board at the outset of the trip. "With 1,200 people to feed, we have no time to make special meals," says Emil Graf, food operations director of the Royal Caribbean.

In contrast, trains and airlines are making vigorous efforts to comply with requests of passengers for special meals. Frontier Airlines offers an astonishing 21 categories of special meals, including such choices as gluten-free and lactose-restricted foods; and most other airlines respond willingly to requests for kosher, low-sodium and vegetarian meals when given at least 24-hours notice. Some also offer an infant's diet and a child's plate that includes such favorites with children as hamburgers and spaghetti.

Air France reports growth in special-meal requests for such categories as Hindu and Moslem meals.

Noticing that three percent of its passengers were ordering vegetarian meals and that many were complaining about the food, United Airlines decided to upgrade its vegetarian offerings. Previously, the meal consisted of large helpings of the same defrosted vegetables that accompany the meat for standard meals. Following a thorough nutritional analysis, however, the airline decided to add grains, legumes and other nutrients necessary to provide vegetarians with complete proteins.

Now a passenger who orders the vegetarian plate may get brown rice with fruit compote and buckwheat groats for breakfast or a vegetarian shepherd's pie for lunch. As evidence that the overall reaction is positive, the airlines exhausted a vendor contract for vegetarian meals in just three months that would formerly have been adequate for a year.

The logistics of food preparation that will go the distance is a particular challenge for transportation com-

panies. One reason sauced dishes are so popular is that they can be reheated with little loss of quality. Shish-ka-bobs, on the other hand, are taboo because the small, exposed chunks of vegetables and meat dry out quickly.

The logistics of food preparation on cruise ships is even more complex, for they may have to be self-sufficient for a week or 10 days between landfalls. Careful menu planning is necessary so that highly perishable items, such as seafood, are consumed early in the cruise. With their excellent refrigeration facilities and time-tested systems for ordering ingredients, most cruise ships serve passengers without a hitch. They can't afford to make many mistakes. As the food and beverage director of one large ship line points out, "You can't run down to the corner if you forget the butter." And that's a fact of life for all companies that serve food on the move. □

Hearty eating on a tall ship

Fish chowder, blueberry muffins and a New England boiled dinner are the kinds of food passengers remember from their week-long voyage on the *Stephen Taber*, a "tall ship" that is the oldest documented merchant vessel in continuous use. Built in 1871, the big schooner sails lazily up and down the Maine coast each summer while its 23 passengers dine on the kind of hearty fare a sailor or farmer might have eaten during the last century.

Ellen Barnes, chef and co-owner of the *Stephen Taber*, does it all with the help of one assistant and a wood stove.

With no freezer, careful management of the food supply is essential. Food stays cool in a large icebox, which is stocked with 700 pounds of ice at the beginning of the week. The first night, had-dock or another kind of fish is served. Midway through the week, Barnes buys freshly caught lobsters and mussels, cooking them with corn over an open fire

on an isolated island. At the end of the week, everyone feasts on prime rib that was delivered frozen and has been thawing slowly in the icebox all week.

Although no systematic restocking is done along the way, there are often a few lucky food finds. "If I see some wonderful, fresh strawberries in a harbor village, I pick them up. There's food on the islands, as well. We sometimes find wild chanterelles, for instance," says Barnes.

The myth that being on the water stimulates the appetite is true, according to Barnes, who marvels at the quantities of food the passengers eat. To make sure they do not return home feeling overfed, she avoids serving rich, greasy foods.

Barnes learned her trade by raising a large family. "It just came through the years. By the time we decided to buy the ship, six years ago, I was absolutely sure I could do it." The response to the food has convinced her she was right.

FOOD ON THE ROAD

by Christine Van Lenten

At any moment in America, a small nation of travellers is on the move, crisscrossing highways, expressways, freeways, parkways and turnpikes. Whether they're truckers hauling the goods that make the economy go round or local shoppers hunting for bargains, they're bound to get hungry. When they're hungry, where do they stop to eat? What are they looking for? And what are they finding?

NRA NEWS interviews with highway restaurants around the country found a healthy diversity in foodservice operations on the road. Traveller preferences support foodservice alternatives ranging from fast food franchises and diners to family-style restaurants and fine food establishments. Here is a look at a few roadside options.

Fast food at low prices . . .

In recent years, Howard Johnson's, the original king of the road, found its turnpike foodservice operations lagging. These sites, held under long-term leases with turnpike authorities, were proving cost-ineffective.

Top management's response to this problem was direct: Give the turnpike travelling public what it wants; and what that public wants, it reasoned, is fast food at low prices.

Accordingly, in 1983, Howard Johnson's took a bold step toward revitalization: It signed an agreement

with Burger King that gives the franchisor authority to convert 80 turnpike foodservice operations to Burger King franchises.

Do these outposts, some of them remote, have trouble attracting and holding staff? No, explains John Weir, director of public relations for Burger King. Because there tend to be few jobs in remote areas, people are highly motivated to work. And longer shifts and toll allowances for employees who travel tollways to foodservice sites help ease the problems of distance.

In a development paralleling Howard Johnson's initiative, Weir reports, Truckstops of America, Inc. is opening freestanding Burger King franchises within its complexes and should have 10 sites across the country within the next three years.

Patrons "want to spend less money and less time" on highway meals, Weir observes. In fact, in such a hurry are Burger King patrons that many don't even get out of their cars to order their food; they drive through the drive-through lane.

Food on display . . .

One alternative to the fast food franchise is the old-time cafeteria. The Davis Brothers chain of cafeterias may have some lessons for its colleagues. This Atlanta-based firm opened its first cafeteria in 1939 and began expanding its highway operations 15 years ago. Its string of 16 caf-

eterias is positioned along heavily trafficked routes that carry the tourist stream from Canada and the northeastern and midwestern United States down to Florida.

Of 16 Davis cafeterias, 13 are attached to motels, and this proximity has helped business. The chain grosses \$25 million a year—about half of it from foodservice operations and half from its motels—and employs 1,300 people. An average Davis cafeteria seats 190 persons. It serves 600 to 800 persons daily for breakfast, 200 to 400 for lunch and anywhere from 200 to 800 for dinner.

Philip Yochum, Davis' vice president and general manager, estimates that roughly half of Davis' cafeteria patrons are tourists, with that percentage varying by site and season. That high percentage is no accident. Not only is Davis well-positioned to serve the tourist stream, but the company's full-time sales staff markets the cafeterias hard to tour groups and to businesses. Its large parking lots routinely accommodate buses from points as far distant as Canada, carrying senior citizens, college students, tourists and military personnel.

To increase its visibility to passing motorists, Davis relies upon billboards and a distinctive motel facade. Yochum notes cafeterias need to get the word to the public that they are competitive with fast food operations in their fast service and that they offer much greater menu variety, often in-

cluding eight or nine vegetables and the choice of eggs cooked to order for breakfast.

Davis' employees also work hard to avoid assembly-line-style service, by making patrons feel personally welcome and by responding promptly to any complaints. District managers routinely get out into the field and talk with patrons, and postage-free cards on each table invite customer comments on food quality, food quantity, service and cleanliness. Yochum reports that the several hundred cards returned each month help management maintain its standards.

But while cafeterias have much to offer patrons, they present a chronic problem to management: the continuing challenge of keeping food items on display looking fresh and attractive. Continuing attention to presentation is crucial, Yochum emphasizes, because what patrons see is what they'll get; and if what they see doesn't look appealing, it just won't sell.

Maintaining immaculately clean rest rooms is a critical factor in Davis' operations, too. Located at the very front of each cafeteria, so patrons won't have to walk through the restaurant in search of them, the rest rooms form the first impression of Davis' operations for many patrons.

Because of seasonal fluctuations in the tourist stream, Davis works hard to build local patronage. The operation employs an advertising agency to handle radio and newspaper ads and increases its advertising during seasonal slumps. It also uses holiday promotions to attract patrons, including an annual Christmas roast turkey dinner, complete with stuffing, that can be ordered to go. The special sells in the thousands every year.

Eating in a railway car . . .

In the northeastern United States roadside diners have a loyal following, although they are virtually nonexistent in other parts of the country.

The true diner, a modified railway car or reasonable facsimile thereof, is often a family-run business, attracting

people as much for its personalized service as for its down-home style and nostalgic surroundings.

On Route 9 in Lake George, NY, Exit 21 off Interstate 87, is the Prospect Mountain Diner, owned by Art Leonard since 1968. Despite competition and heavy seasonal fluctuations, the diner is doing well. Leonard reports that during the busy summer season, roughly 75 percent of his patrons are vacationing families, many of whom come back year after year with children who have grown from babies into teenagers. A flattering article in *New York Magazine* hasn't hurt business, either.

The diner's basic menu has changed little through the years, although soup and salad have been added in response to competition. But 14 years ago, Leonard took a gamble that has paid off. Believing that the summer crowd would welcome a Chinese restaurant in the area, Leonard added a Chinese restaurant to the diner during summer months. Leonard

has been lucky enough to find a Chinese cook willing to take a job that lasts only five months of the year. (The chef works the balance of the year on Long Island, NY.)

Sharp seasonal swings can create labor problems. Leonard's staff falls from 45 people working the 24-hour-a-day summer schedule to around six people on a severely restricted winter schedule. But Leonard cultivates a loyal, stable staff by hiring local high school students, training them and retaining them over the summers as they go on through college. "We pay them well and treat them well," he says when asked to explain his retention success.

The Burlington Diner on Route 130 in Burlington, NJ, is a more conventional diner with a steadier, year-round clientele. Many a motorist in search of an alternative to turnpike food has found his way off Exit 5 of the New Jersey Turnpike to this establishment and the diner draws traffic from Interstate 295, too. But it has been hurt as well as helped by these routes. Located on what was once the major route to New York City when it was established 35 years ago, the diner has found traffic diverted by new routes and nearby fast food operations—particularly for breakfasts.

While the family-owned, 150-seat diner continues to offer its traditional menu, it has added some seafood items in response to changing preferences. Owner-manager Anthony Mastoris believes his customers come for quality and a full menu of choices.

Although he doesn't pursue any particular marketing strategies, Mas-



toris enjoys a welcome source of revenue from buses that bring shoppers to Burlington's discount clothing outlets, booking dinner reservations in advance.

Where trucks stop . . .

Despite general changes in the American diet in the direction of lighter meals, at two major truck stop plazas a continent away from each other it seems there has been little change in the diet of the patrons. The biggest selling items are high caloric, high starch, high fat foods served in large portions.

The Boron Stop 64 in Lamar, PA, greets truckers on one of the most heavily trafficked routes in the nation: the intersection of Route 64 with Interstate 80, which runs from New York City to Oakland, CA. Local patrons are a negligible factor at this I-80 outpost. During the summer, around 40 percent of the customers are truckers and 60 percent are tourists. During the winter, 80 percent are truckers and only 20 percent are tourists.

In addition to a 150-seat restaurant handling 30,000 transactions a month for sales of \$85,000, the Boron Stop encompasses a gift shop, motel, garage for repairs, fuel pumps and parking for 150 trucks. Parking is a major attraction. For those truckers who sleep in the cabs, a safe, well-lit parking lot is a matter of some concern. Showering is important, too. The Boron Stop has just built six new showers and is adding another six.

According to General Manager Dominic Raco, price is a secondary concern for truckers. Their first concern is food. "It's got to be good, and there has to be lots of it," he says. Raco sells lots of breakfasts and lots of hamburgers. The tourists seem to enjoy the opportunity to sample genuine truck driver food. Particularly favored is a breakfast of sausage with gravy over biscuits.

Last year, the Boron Stop opened a deli in its restaurant that offers ready-made items to go, including sand-

wiches, barbecued ribs and half of a barbecued chicken as well as potato salad, baked beans, homemade pies with towering meringue toppings, cookies, sticky buns, ice cream and soda. Raco notes that the deli has brought in new business—perhaps as much as \$7,000 a month.

Although the Boron Stop advertises over FM radio on country music stations, word-of-mouth advertising takes on a special meaning for truck stops, whose customers literally talk a restaurant up or down over CB radios.

Across the country in Santa Nella, CA, is the Mid-Cal Auto Truck Plaza. Here veteran truckers pull off Interstate 5—the major truck route from Canada to Mexico. A Union 76 truck stop established in 1973, Mid-Cal is one of the biggest and most successful in the western United States, with sales of more than one million dollars a year.

Mid-Cal has been likened to a miniature city, complete with a truck wash, fully-computerized fuel pumps, tire and auto mechanic stores, free showers, gift store, vending machines, video games, a check-cashing service and a motel.

Mid-Cal's 200-seat restaurant, which serves 2,000 persons a day, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, is second only to fuel as a source of income, according to Erie Jackson, Mid-Cal's manager since 1979.

Jackson estimates that 80 percent of the restaurant customers are truckers and 20 percent are tourists, including some tour buses. A special section is set aside for "truckers only." Pay phones at each of the

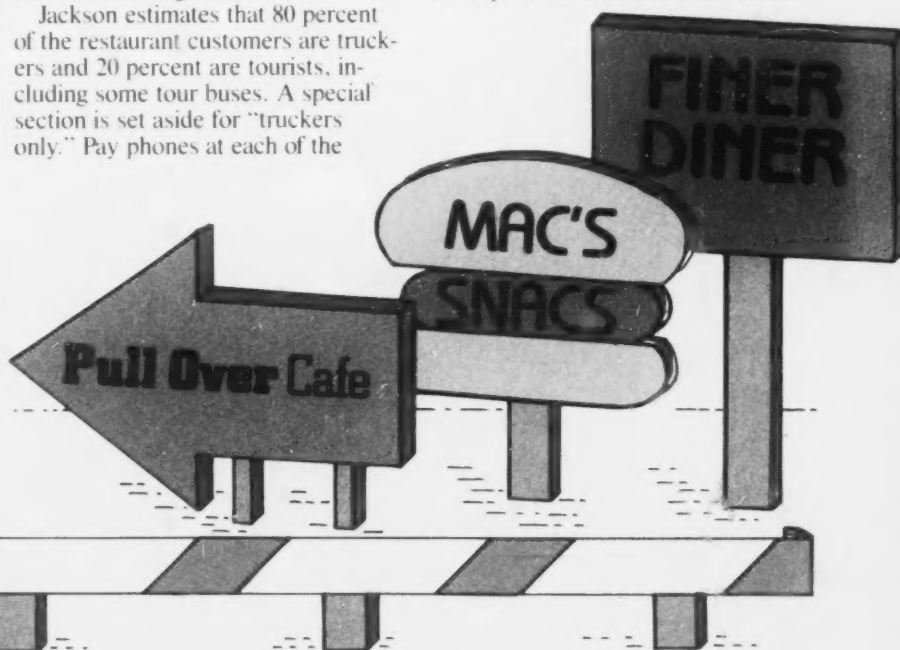
truckers' tables let them conduct their business during the meal. There are many repeat customers, says Jackson, attracted by the inexpensive but full-menu, fast service, good fresh coffee, cigarette vending machines and sociability.

As at the Boron Stop, dietary preferences run to "massive amounts of food" in traditional meat-and-potato style, with particularly heavy breakfasts and dinners. The menu features a number of popular Mexican items. The restaurant has a salad bar, but Jackson observes that truckers eat salad as an adjunct to huge meals, rather than as a light substitute. And if anything remains uneaten from their plates, it's likely to be vegetables. This preference for traditional fare makes the future safe for the truck stop menu, Jackson believes.

While the vast majority of Mid-Cal's patrons are transients, Mid-Cal has instituted a senior citizen night every second Saturday for seniors from a local mobile home park. More than 100 of these seniors attend regularly, bringing with them their own senior citizen band to play music from the 1920s and 1930s. Mid-Cal also offers a 10 percent discount to seniors during the week and a complete dinner for \$4.75.

An upscale coffee shop . . .

In striking contrast to Mid-Cal is The Apricot Tree, a 250-seat venture



DETOUR

FOR SLOW FOOD

They stopped the clock on purpose at the Brookville Hotel, where the menu hasn't changed since 1915. Located in Brookville, KS, fifteen miles from Salina with a population of 250, the hotel is just off old Route 40—once the main area highway. Now Interstate 70, seven miles distant, gets the lion's share of traffic, and the hotel feels the difference.

Still, business is good enough to support the fourth generation of owners, Connie and Mark Martin. Built in 1870 by the Kansas Pacific Railroad, the hotel has been in the same family since 1894. The building is an historic landmark and includes five separate dining rooms with decor ranging from country to Victorian.

Mark's grandmother, Helen Martin, brought the landmark hotel to fame during the 1930s, with her warm hospitality and family-style, pan-fried chicken dinners.

The hotel serves as the site for local wedding rehearsals and birthday and anniversary celebrations. But with a sparse local population that is highly sensitive to swings in the farm economy, the hotel relies principally upon out-of-area patrons for its profits.

To increase efficiency, the hotel restricts its hours of operation, opening for three hours Tuesday through Saturday evenings and all day Sundays. It closes on Mondays. On average, the hotel restaurant serves between 200 and 300 people on weekdays and between 500 and 600 people on Sundays for a total of 60,000 to 70,000 persons per year.

Getting and keeping good help is no problem for the Martins, who offer good wages, a pleasant setting, pleasant clientele and short shifts that end by 8:30 p.m. in an area where jobs are scarce.

Located near the center of Kansas, the hotel has become a

favored meeting ground for families dispersed around the state. And it is enjoying a legacy from former Shilling Air Force Base, once located in Salina. Servicemen stationed at Shilling over the years patronized the Brookville Hotel and came to love it. When they dispersed all over the country, they recommended the hotel to family and friends traveling through Kansas and have come back themselves, bringing children and grandchildren.

The hotel is such an institution that many families plan their trips around a stop there. And when Connie and Mark Martin have worn their "Brookville Hotel" T-shirts on vacations in Florida and the Caribbean, they've been greeted by people who exclaim, "Oh! We've eaten there!"

Dinners at the Brookville Hotel are homestyle: a relish tray of spiced peaches and spiced apple rings, bread and butter pickles, carrot sticks and celery, Pennsylvania-style sweet and sour coleslaw made with whipping cream, cottage cheese blended with whipping cream, mashed potatoes with chicken gravy, whole kernel style corn, home-made baking powder biscuits with butter and strawberry preserves, half a pan-fried chicken, vanilla ice cream, and coffee, tea, or milk—served on linen table cloths with Blue Willow china.

Why has the menu remained the same over the years? "People want consistency," Connie Martin explains. "They come back for what they remember." What is remembered is good enough to have won the Brookville a write-up in *Good Food, The Adventurous Eater's Guide to Restaurants Serving America's Best Regional Food* by Jane and Michael Stern, published just last year. The Martins hope that the book will send new patrons.

recently opened by Mid-Cal's owner Dave Buchanan. Forty miles south of Mid-Cal off Interstate 5 in Firebaugh, CA, it is halfway between San Francisco and Bakersfield in the rural San Joaquin valley.

The Apricot Tree is passed by the same stream of travellers that pass Mid-Cal. But it draws a very different clientele, including tourists and some car-pooling executives who appreciate the attractive decor of exposed beams and stained glass and an imaginative menu that features freshness, attractive presentation and creativity. The ample parking lot accommodates two or three tour buses a week during the busy summer season. Three adjacent gas stations help draw patrons, too.

"People are looking for a little novelty," Manager Richard Birch states, observing that if one of his croissant sandwiches were served to a Mid-Cal trucker, the trucker "would throw it back at you and ask for a real sandwich." But at The Apricot Tree, croissant sandwiches sell well, along with pita sandwiches, chef salad on deep-fried tortilla shells, shrimp salad, taco salad and homemade, fresh fruit crepes. Mexican items sell well, too.

But the biggest contributors to The Apricot Tree's sales are the gourmet burgers laden with such items as mushrooms, Swiss cheese and onions. They pull in 25 percent of the receipts. Breakfasts are next, at 21 percent, with beverages third at 15 percent. And The Apricot Tree continues to sell a lot of dinner steaks and prime rib.

Most vegetables are freshly cooked, soups are prepared from scratch, and breakfasts are served with skewers of fruit. Birch sees dietary preferences changing and reports that The Apricot Tree has shifted from white bread to wheat-berried and whole grain.

"People are learning that what's good for you can taste good, too," he notes.

In addition, the restaurant develops its apricot theme with such desserts as apricot fizz, apricot freeze and apricot pie as well as apricot wine. Free samples of the wine are offered to patrons with lunch and dinner. While most travellers don't want to drink alcohol with their meals, they do buy apricot wine at the restaurant's flourishing gift shop, which

grosses \$40,000 to \$60,000 a month during the summer. The shop also sells wine glasses bearing the restaurant's emblem, souvenirs, stuffed animals and novelty items that bear "higher than average price tags." The restaurant will soon be selling its own label apricot wine and plans to add a hot fudge machine and a take-out operation.

Most of The Apricot Tree's business comes from summer traffic. A summer staff of 130 works shifts from 6:30 a.m. to midnight, and waiting lines of 45 to 60 minutes are not uncommon. In the winter, trade is down 50 percent, staff is cut back to 45 to 50 persons, and the restaurant closes at 8:00 p.m.

A small, but steady, source of income is the patronage of 30 or so affluent, local farmers, who use The Apricot Tree as an office-away-from-home, stopping in several times a day and sitting for hours together over lunch.

The restaurant's major problem is labor. Unlike Mid-Cal, a separate corporation with its own set of well-established employee policies and relations, The Apricot Tree is still developing its policies and labor pool. Birch reports difficulty in attracting and holding a stable staff, many of whom must drive 20 to 40 miles to get to work.

Bugs are a problem, too, which the restaurant combats aggressively. "You name it, we have it. We're part of the farmland," says Birch philosophically. "You just have to deal with it." Cricket infestations have been a particular menace, and Birch recalls patrons once wondering if cricket songs were being piped in along with Muzak to contribute to the bucolic atmosphere.

Alligator meat and Cajun specials . . .

Even more upscale than The Apricot Tree is Dingus McGee, which views itself primarily as a local restaurant that happens to be on a major highway. Dingus McGee is located in Colfax, CA, off Interstate 80 between San Francisco and Lake Tahoe—2,000 feet from the foot of the Sierra Nevada mountains. Tucked into a hillside near the interstate overpass, it suffers from poor visibility and relies upon billboards to help call attention to itself.

But Dingus McGee has a lot more going for it than billboards. A fine dining establishment with sales of \$1.6 million a year and 10,000 transactions a month, it is serving innovative American cuisine that has drawn patrons and won media attention from far away.

Most recently, management sent its chef to New Orleans to study Cajun and Creole cooking under famed chef Paul Prudhomme at K-Paul's. It then proceeded to introduce Cajun food to northern California, relying upon fresh seafood and other provisions

Traveller preferences support a broad range of foodservice alternatives

flowed in weekly from New Orleans. It now enjoys the distinction of serving more alligator than any restaurant in the world—a distinction that is not a secret thanks to a marketing consultant the restaurant hired to help promote its Cajun specials. Media coverage from UPI, the *Los Angeles Times* as well as radio and TV shows is helping build clientele.

The restaurant's changing menu reflects the national trend away from red meat toward seafood and fresh produce. And it reflects the national weakness for heavy desserts, particularly chocolate.

Co-owners Robert Townsend and Dennis Freidig began Dingus McGee 10 years ago on the site of a former bus stop, with no previous restaurant experience. They believe that success begins with good food, high quality, and strong management; but that beyond these factors, it is marketing that makes the difference.

At Dingus McGee, marketing begins with the old adage, "Stay close to the customer." All customers are invited to complete a questionnaire, and Townsend and Freidig use the results to modify and develop their operations. Because the survey is written humorously and offers a reward, the response rate is high: 1,500 to

2,000 questionnaires are dropped into collection boxes at the restaurant exit each month.

The surveys have helped identify the restaurant customer. Because more than 60 percent of all patrons come from within 20 miles and 85 percent come from within 40 miles, Dingus McGee has asked customers to indicate whether they want to be included on a mailing list. Those who say "yes" are sent a follow-up card offering an incentive for them to return within a three-month period. The 300 to 400 people who return are then sent a third card, which offers another incentive to come back. Of this number, perhaps 200 return. Incentives include such items as free wine, discounts on desserts and free samples of Cajun cooking, including alligator meat. These promotions have generated as much as 10 percent of the restaurant's sales as well as a mailing list of 30,000 names, which may soon be computerized.

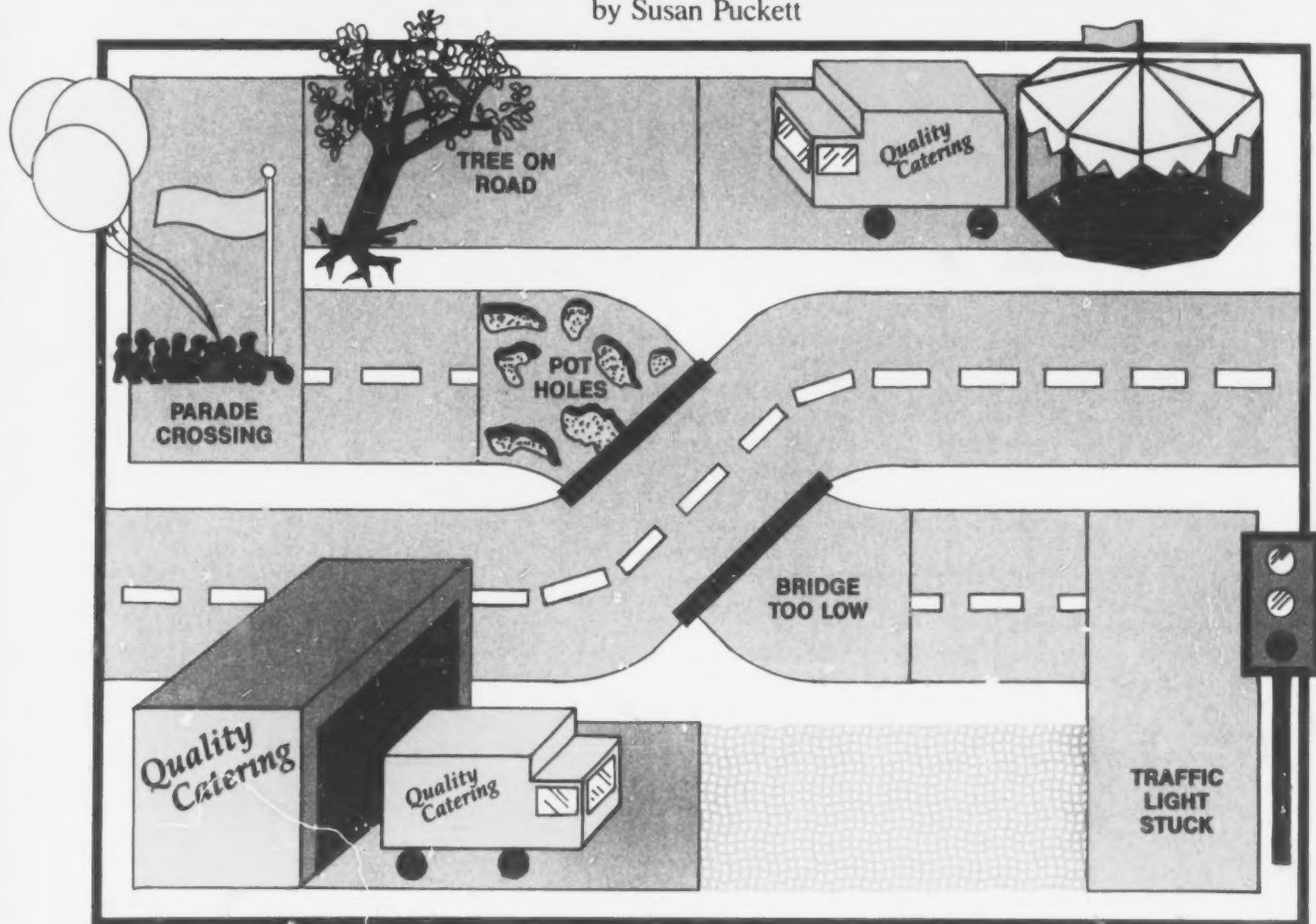
People travelling to gamble in Reno and to ski in Tahoe will call from the San Francisco Bay area in advance for reservations at Dingus McGee, which two years ago was voted the best restaurant in the Sacramento area. And many of these patrons are repeat customers, who plan their trips to include a stop at the restaurant. The owners have even considered installing a toll-free 800 number to handle long-distance reservations.

Dingus McGee serves brunch, lunch and dinner in its 150-seat restaurant. It also has an oyster bar; a 60-seat patio, where patrons can enjoy appetizers; a 150-person bar with a TV screen and an extensive children's menu. There is also a special menu for senior citizens that offers smaller portions and a 10 percent discount.

While Townsend and Freidig are working aggressively to expand their clientele, they stress the importance of strong local support—not least to maintain stable staffing levels. Their high percentage of area patrons keeps seasonal swings small. The owners invest heavily in staff training and maintain high performance standards. As the largest employer and taxpayer in tiny Colfax and with few other jobs available locally, Dingus McGee finds little difficulty attracting and holding a staff of 60 in the scenically beautiful setting. □

HOW TO DELIVER THE CATERED FEAST INTACT

by Susan Puckett



For off-premise caterers, it takes more than culinary wizardry and a keen business sense to be a success. Their reputations also hinge on their ability to deliver the feast to its proper destination—safely, promptly and just as the customer ordered.

There are numerous critical factors

caterers must be prepared to deal with when transporting food away from their home turf—whether it's keeping a four-foot wedding cake intact over a pothole-ridden street or making sure a congealed salad doesn't turn to soup.

"Any time you agree to cater at a location selected by the client, you lose the friendly, familiar environment

of your own kitchen," says Michael Roman, president of the Mixing Bowl Ltd., in Chicago, IL, and instructor for the National Restaurant Association. "But that need not be a limitation, as long as you've got creativity."

Each delivery requires a carefully devised game plan based upon an array of variables: the menu, the occasion, the location, the number of

guests, the available facilities and even the weather forecast. Attention to such matters will enable a caterer to better budget his time, organize his materials and determine the amount of prep work that should be done in his own kitchen.

Top priority: the right vehicles . . .

First and foremost, Roman says, a caterer must be equipped with a proper vehicle. Even though some try to make do with a station wagon loaded with a couple of ice chests, refrigerated trucks are ideal and, in some municipalities, are required.

Some caterers have their trucks or vans installed with convection ovens and portable cooking units so they can prepare as much food as possible on the premises. Others have them custom-built with entire kitchen facilities. One such manufacturer of deluxe mobile food equipment is Custom Sales and Service, Inc., in Hammon-ton, NJ. According to Sales Manager Larry O. Cabrol, caterers may order custom-built trucks complete with grills, deep-fat fryers with grease outlets and vents, pizza ovens, deep freezers and even kitchen counters and sinks with hot and cold running water. Companies also manufacture delivery trucks with separate refrigerated and heated units for transporting both hot and cold food.

Although large catering operations often own an entire fleet of delivery vehicles, smaller outfits may get by easily with only one vehicle and rent extra trucks, vans or station wagons for larger jobs. Paul Krupnick, co-owner of Dorothy H. Krupnick Gourmet Catering, Inc., in New York City, has occasionally startled guests by arriving at a function in a Greyhound bus. "The luggage compartment is ideal for carrying large quantities of food," he says. "And the staff and equipment can ride above. That way, we can make our entire delivery in one shot, without having to rent a lot of extra vehicles."

No matter what form of transportation a caterer chooses, however, the storage space for food should be windowless and adequately air conditioned. Keeping foods within a safe temperature range to prevent any chance of contamination should be a top priority at all times, including when it's being transported.

Foods to be served cold should be

pre-chilled to 45°F or lower. They should be chilled rapidly, either by setting them on ice or placing them in shallow containers that are then immersed in cold water. Large quantities of cooked foods should be separated into smaller containers to facilitate rapid cooling.

Hot foods, on the other hand, should remain above 140°F during holding and storing. Pork requires 150°F, and poultry requires 165°F. Many caterers use Cambro hot pan carriers—stackable units used by the Meals-on-Wheels program—for keeping foods warm.

Well-insulated coolers or portable cabinets, constructed of styrofoam, polyethylene plastic, metal or wood can be effective for keeping foods hot or cold. Cold foods, may be packed with wet ice, dry ice or gel-type freezer packs for extra coldness.

Some foods travel better than others . . .

Some foods travel better than others, depending on how they are prepared. "Foods nestled together will stay warmer than those that aren't," Michael Roman advises. "It's much easier to maintain the temperature of a solid mass of food, such as spinach and mushroom casserole, than cooked whole baby carrots, which would allow air to circulate around them and cool them off."

Larger meats are less likely to dry out than individual cuts. It would be much better, for example, to take a whole beef tenderloin and slice it at the site than to transport individual filet mignons. Sauces also help keep foods moist.

"The menu has to be designed so that it can be transported," agrees D. Allen Wint, owner of D. Allen Wint's Tower Catering and Restaurant in Ardmore, OK. "You couldn't prepare eggs benedict and expect to haul them 200 miles."

Nevertheless, Wint and his full-time catering director Charles Enteline have successfully pulled off other seemingly impossible long-distance culinary feats.

For a luau in Denver, Wint baked four 60-pound halibuts and roasted a suckling pig, which were then quick-frozen and packed in styrofoam boxes with dry ice. A truck delivered them to the site several days in advance so that they would have ample

time to thaw.

On another occasion, Wint treated New Hampshire clients and their guests to an authentic, Oklahoma-style barbecue. Barbecued briskets, ribs and smoked sausages were quick-frozen and delivered to the site by truck, along with a few novelty items sure to generate a few ooh's and aah's: a whole rattlesnake and "calf fries." Wint contacted a local New Hampshire caterer to supply a few of the trimmings that couldn't be frozen, such as cole slaw and kidney beans. He adds, however, that "I always cook in my own kitchen the things I do really well, like my barbecue."

Protection for fragile foods . . .

Finding ways to transport fragile foods is a dilemma for every caterer; but Jay Treadwell, general manager of Ridgewell's Caterer in Bethesda, MD, has devised some handy solutions. To retain the shape of delicate French pastries, Ridgewell's inserts toothpicks before wrapping them in plastic and placing them in heavy-gauge cardboard boxes.

Ann LeBuffe, catering director for Ann-Howard Cookery in Farmington, CT, provides extra protection for her wedding cakes by packaging each tier in a separate cardboard box and transporting them separately in a station wagon under the watchful eye of a staff person.

To prevent leaks of salad dressing or sauces, Paul Krupnick has a policy of wrapping every container individually in a plastic bag and securing it tightly. "That way, if a lid should pop off, all we have to do is scoop it back into the container without it spilling on anything else."

Even experienced caterers get a case of the butterfingers now and then and, for that reason, many try to avoid glass containers. Aluminum pans, plastic tubs and styrofoam containers all work well.

For packing china, silver, coffee urns and various utility items, Krupnick has found that fiber-filled boxes used for packing movie equipment and lights are ideal. Not only are they durable, he says, they're lightweight as well—a big plus when it comes to loading and unloading the delivery vehicle.

The arrangement of boxes inside the vehicle is also important. "Generally, we try to see to it that

Tips for transporting foods from one site to another

1 Use vehicles that provide ample storage space, are adequately air-conditioned and comply with the regulations of your municipality.

2 Package food and equipment in non-breakable, lightweight containers.

3 Design your menu for transportation. Don't include items that may perish or deteriorate on the way.

4 Load your vehicle intelligently. Keep packages from shifting by setting them on non-slippery surfaces, padding them with cloth or paper or strapping them down.

5 Keep foods within a safe temperature range to avoid contamination by packing them in well-insulated coolers and portable cabinets.

6 Supply all helpers with worksheets that outline their duties and responsibilities and provide detailed check-lists. Circle each item as it is loaded onto the vehicle. Provide extras for everything.

7 Become familiar with facilities you will have access to at the catering location. Make a list of all equipment and supplies you will need to provide.

8 Contact reliable rental services which can deliver directly to the site any accoutrements you may not be able to furnish yourself.

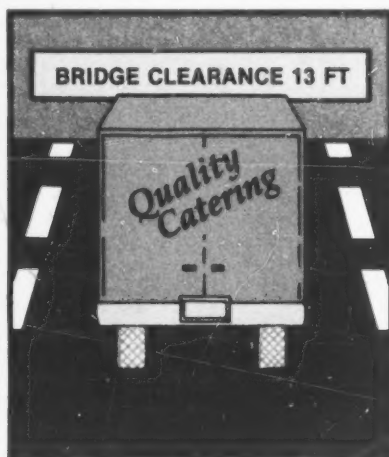
9 Allow plenty of time for travel, loading, unloading and setting up. Make allowances for heavy traffic, poor road conditions and so forth. Give drivers explicit directions as well as phone numbers of the clients and anyone else they may need to reach.

10 Always have an extra vehicle on hand. Make sure the driver is equipped with cash and credit cards to handle emergencies.

whatever should come out of the truck first once we get there goes on last," Krupnick says, "although that isn't always possible."

To keep boxes from bumping into one another, slippery surfaces should be avoided. Old rugs, towels and crumpled paper may be used for padding, and some packages should actually be strapped down.

A few caterers ease the burden of delivery by hiring rental companies to furnish and transport serving items or



other accessories. Todd Carter, director of catering at Westin's St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco, CA, employs a professional mover to load and deliver his culinary masterpieces. These assignments have included a lobster terrine with golden caviar and a roast loin of pork, stuffed with morel mushroom mousse, prepared for a state dinner attended by Queen Elizabeth II.

A backup plan for crises . . .

No matter how well organized you are, however, there's no safeguard against all crises—a fact most caterers are reminded of time and again. For that reason, it's always wise to have some sort of backup plan.

"I couldn't succeed without good help," says Mildred Brown, owner of VIP Catering in Jackson, MS. She always makes sure someone follows her to each job in case of car trouble along the way. The helper parks the car in front of the catering site throughout the event, should Brown suddenly need an errand run.

"I was once hired to cater a party for 1,200, and 3,200 people showed up," she recalls. She sent her driver back to her restaurant, Mildred's Tea

Room, to bring back any food items that could be used. He returned with an eggplant casserole, which was transformed into a dip, and quiches, which were cut in bite-sized pieces for appetizers.

Bad weather can also force a caterer to make a quick menu change.

"For a dinner party, I had planned to do a baked Alaska for dessert,"

Brown notes. "But the day I was supposed to deliver it, it poured down rain and the humidity was just terrible. So I packed up the ice cream in dry ice and served it with cherries jubilee instead."

To every catering site, Brown always takes an emergency kit, packed with cream cheese, sandwich spreads, cans of soup and other useful ingredients—should the food supply run short. "And I always carry extra cocktail napkins and clear plastic drinking glasses in my car to cover myself, if necessary."

Jay Treadwell is also a firm believer in preparing for the unexpected. Standby trucks are always ready to jump into action, and all of his drivers are equipped with contact beepers should they need to call for assistance.

One such time was when a food truck carrying multiple deliveries was unable to get to one of the catering sites because it was too tall to pass under a low bridge.

"The truck barely made it under the bridge for the first delivery, which was also the largest," he recalls. "But after it was unloaded, the back raised up a few inches. In order for the truck to get to the next site, another truck had to be sent to load it down with weights until it was low enough to fit back under the bridge."

When traveling longer distances in particular, D. Allen Wint allows extra traveling time and sends his drivers with "plenty of cash and credit cards."

On the way to a four-day horse sale, the truck carrying the food and beverages broke down—and had to be hauled 60 miles by a wrecker. Though the towing charge was astronomical, everything arrived on the site in time to make the event a success.

"When you're in the catering business, you have to be prepared to do whatever has to be done to satisfy your client," says Wint. □

What restaurant owners should know about wage and hour negotiations with the government

Prepared for the NRA Law Department
by Robert W. Hartland, Esq.
Reed, Smith, Shaw & McClay, Pittsburgh, PA

For many restaurant owners, their first experience with the United States Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division is when the compliance officer (CO) calls at the restaurant to uncover possible violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

Frequently, the employer assumes that the CO is objective—he just has a job to do. And this perception is nurtured by the CO's initial polite attitude and demeanor. The fact of the matter is that the CO is not unbiased. He is there for the very purpose of subjecting your operations to investigation. He is paid to do that. He is not paid to return empty handed.

Therefore, no matter what he tells you, or how he appears at first meeting, he is your antagonist in this process. You should never lose sight of that fact.

Don't rely on the CO's statement of the facts

The facts as represented by the CO may or may not be accurate. But one thing is certain—the facts are not accurate simply because the CO represents them to be so or because the CO says they are supported by interview statements he has taken. The employer should conduct his own evaluation.

In the vast majority of cases, all of the CO's conclusions of illegality and

monetary demands are based upon interviews the CO conducts with current and/or past employees. The CO will tell the employer that he has many signed statements supporting all the conclusions reached by him and supporting his demand for back wages. If the restaurant owner does not actually know what the facts are—i.e., whether employees are performing any off-the-clock work—he may be inclined to accept the CO's version.

Official government policy prevents the CO from telling the employer whether the investigation was prompted by a charge filed by an employee or whether the investigation was merely conducted "at random." Also, the CO will not reveal the statements nor the identity of the statement givers.

The courts have been extraordinarily protective of the Wage and Hour Division's investigations. Through a doctrine called "informer's privilege," the government is able to withhold the identity of the statement givers. Labor counsel representing employers, however, should be able to obtain copies of the substantive portions of the statements with the identity of the statement giver deleted.

Anyone who has had occasion to review these statements knows they are often inaccurate and exaggerated.

Because the CO is transcribing the statements to support his conclusions, quite frequently adjectives and adverbs are very loosely used and comments reflecting the absence of liability often are not recorded by the CO. Even when statements are signed as accurate, people frequently sign these statements with very little careful review of what the CO actually wrote down. In addition, of course, the statement giver may be influenced by the prospect of back pay.

Don't rely upon the CO's statement of the law

Another common failing of restaurant owners or managers when faced with wage and hour demands from the government is to assume that the government agent is accurately stating the employer's obligations.

This is a mistake. First, the CO is not a lawyer. Moreover, as in any other job classification, the quality, knowledge and experience of COs vary considerably. In addition, certain wage and hour questions are, legally, quite complex, and the CO frequently will have no idea of the law regarding certain issues.

Beyond this, however, even in cases where the CO knows the law, the CO frequently does not feel obligated to explain it to the employer. A perfect example of this is reflected in the

government's approach to the initiation of a restaurant investigation. Most legal commentators would agree that a compliance officer of the Wage and Hour Division of the Department of Labor cannot forcibly enter business premises to review a restaurant's records or interview employees without first obtaining a search warrant.

Indeed, the Department of Labor, when forced to announce its policy regarding investigative powers in litigated cases, has stated that its COs will not attempt to enter a business over an employer's objection, but rather will merely subpoena the production of company records and conduct interviews—both off the employer's premises.

Notwithstanding this official posture, the fact is that when a compliance officer appears at a restaurant unannounced or calls an employer, the CO does not explain the employer's rights in connection with this investigation. Invariably, the CO only informs the employer that an investigation will be conducted on the employer's premises and will involve record review and interviews of employees. The only issue over which there is any discussion is when to commence the investigation.

The message should be quite clear. Do not rely upon the accuracy of any compliance officer's or

other government agent's statement of your legal obligations under the FLSA. The government's position may be right; it may also be wrong. Consult a competent management labor relations attorney if you have any question.

Do not pay money you are not required to pay

From this point forward, we will assume that the CO has uncovered certain FLSA violations in your restaurant and you have confirmed that violations in fact occurred. For example, let's assume that for each server a restaurant was deducting one-half hour's pay per shift for a break that, in fact, the servers were not taking. Instead, the servers were working straight through the break. For each server, then, for each shift, there is one-half hour of uncompensated time. Let's assume further that the CO has computed the restaurant's back pay liability as follows:

a) uncompensated time
20 servers per day X one
shift per day = 20 shifts
per day
20 shifts per day X seven
days a week = 140 shifts
per week
140 shifts per week X ½
hour per shift = 70 hours
per week
70 hours per week X \$3.35
per hour = \$234.50 per
week
\$234.50 per week X 52
weeks = \$12,194 per
year
\$12,194 per year X 2 years
= \$24,388

The compliance officer tells the restaurateur that, if he is smart, he will pay the \$24,388 and be glad he is getting off "easy." He will claim that he could go back three years to compute the liability rather than two

years and that he could add interest. He may also claim that the law provides for double damages in the form of liquidated damages. If you find yourself faced with such a situation, what should you do?

1. Immediately change the offending policy

After consulting management labor relations counsel, the first step you should take to begin reducing your liability is to immediately alter or amend the violative policy.

How does such an action reduce your potential liability? The Fair Labor Standards Act provides for a basic back pay liability period of two years. This time frame can be extended to three years in case of "willful violations." The law provides, however, that one measures the two-year or three-year period from the date the government files a complaint against the employer in federal court.

A restaurant operator should keep in mind that the government is an enormous bureaucracy that moves quite slowly. When the CO first talks to the employer about violations he has uncovered, the government is a long way from initiating any lawsuit based on those violations. Indeed, frequently six months, a year or even more time passes before any complaint is filed. Of course, once the restaurant has eliminated the offending policy, every day that passes reduces the total monetary obligation owed. Aware of the degree to which the passage of time can eat away at back wage claims, at some point the government usually requests that the employer sign a waiver of the statute of limitations. If this is signed by the employer, the employer loses the benefits

resulting from the passage of time. Such waivers should certainly never be signed before consulting counsel.

2. Assess possible offsets

The next step is for the employer to investigate whether there are any offsets or credits against back wage computations compiled by the government.

For example, certain states, such as New York, Washington, D.C. and Connecticut, have minimum wages in excess of the federal minimum wage. In addition, certain states, such as New York, Connecticut, Michigan, Oregon, Rhode Island and so forth, have enacted statutes that are more stringent, in terms of available tip credit than is the federal law. For example, New York permits a maximum tip credit of \$1.05 whereas federal law permits a tip credit of \$1.34. Beyond this, certain states impose uniform maintenance obligations more costly than federal requirements.

All such statutes can mean that the employer is actually paying cash wages significantly in excess of the federal minimum cash wage requirement (\$2.01 per hour). Such excesses can create a fund to offset any FLSA violations.

3. Do not be bullied by concepts

Three issues that frequently surface in FLSA negotiations between employers and the Wage and Hour Division enforcers are: 1) the FLSA limitations period, 2) liquidated damages and 3) interest. The restaurant owner should understand enough about these concepts not to be unnecessarily threatened.

a. The limitations period

As noted earlier, the basic FLSA limitations period is two years. This

means that the employer can be held accountable, in back pay, for violations dating back two years from the date an FLSA complaint is filed in federal court. This basic two-year period can be extended, however, to three years in cases of willful violations. The government generally has a very minimal burden to meet to establish willfulness. The majority of the courts have concluded that there is a "willful" violation of the FLSA if the employer knew or had reason to know that his conduct was governed by the Federal Labor Standards Act.

Nevertheless, the fact is that in negotiations the government will not ordinarily press for a three-year liability period. While government representatives may allude to the three-year period, the employer should recognize that, generally speaking, the government expects to settle cases on a two-year theory. Generally, the only cases in which the government strongly negotiates for a three-year liability period are cases of repeat violations or cases where, due to government delays in processing, the government could collect little or nothing in back pay if it does not press for the three-year liability period.

In addition, there are various legal restraints on the government's ability to obtain an additional year's worth of liability under a "willful violation" theory. For example, the courts have held that in situations where a compliance officer of the Wage and Hour Division investigated the restaurant on a prior occasion and found no violations regarding a specific policy, the government cannot later claim that violation of that same policy constituted a willful act.

b. Liquidated damages

As noted earlier, negotiation representatives of the Wage and Hour Division often will attempt to pressure the employer for a full back pay settlement by threatening the employer with the prospect of double damages if a court suit is required. It is important that the employer understand what liquidated damages are under the FLSA.

First, it is true that certain sections of the Federal Labor Standards Act provide for an award of liquidated damages. In essence, the FLSA vests in the judge discretion to award liquidated damages of any amount up to, but not to exceed, the amount of back wages found due in the court suit. There are, however, a number of limitations or restrictions upon the government's liquidated damage arguments.

- There is no automatic doubling of back pay. As noted above, liquidated damages, if awarded at all, can be awarded in any amount up to a maximum of the amount of back wages found due.
- If the employer can demonstrate "good faith and reasonable grounds" for believing that he committed no FLSA violations, no liquidated damages should be awarded at all.
- While perhaps obvious, it must be remembered that the maximum amount of liquidated damages recoverable is necessarily limited by the amount of back wages the government can prove to be due and owing. Simply remember that while the prospect of liquidated damages is real and something that should be assessed, the amount of *provable* back wage claims always sets the limit for the potential additional liability.
- The FLSA liquidated damage provision was nev-

er intended to be punitive in nature. The sole purpose of FLSA's liquidated damage provision was to compensate employees for the delay in their receipt of wages due. As such, the courts should never award an amount in liquidated damages in excess of the amount that reasonably could have been earned by the back wages since the time the back wages were due. This amount may be significantly less than the amount produced by doubling back wages due.

Finally, while the potential for a liquidated damage award is real and cannot be discounted, it is the author's experience that in cases of negotiated settlements the government actually does not expect to receive any additional compensation because of the potential claim for liquidated damages.

c. Interest

If a case is ultimately litigated by the government and back wages are found due and owing, interest on back pay awards is quite frequently awarded. But if interest is awarded, liquidated damages should not be awarded; it is one or the other. As in the case of liquidated damages, the employer should not increase any settlement offer to account for any interest claim.

Assessing a proper settlement figure

In any settlement negotiation the government obviously does not expect the employer to pay the entire maximum potential back wage claims. Specifically, as noted earlier, the government's interview statements are often exaggerated, and, due to the passage of time, frequently witnesses cannot be located. Even when potential witnesses can be lo-

cated, they often do not want to get involved. This is particularly true in the restaurant industry where tipped employees are especially reluctant to testify since they realize that they may be subject to cross-examination regarding their own tip declarations.

In short, the government recognizes that it faces its own problems of proof if the case does not settle and has to be tried. Thus the employer should tell the government negotiators that, if the matter went to trial, the employer would insist that each employee, on behalf of whom the government claims back wages, would be forced to be present and testify at the trial.

Too often, the government has gotten away in litigation with having only a few employees testify and suggesting to the court that such testimony applies to all employees. Such a "sample" methodology should be permitted only in limited circumstances involving an attack upon a prevailing policy that would affect all employees identically. If no such general practice is involved and at issue is, for example, whether certain employees worked off the clock and, if so, how much; then the government's "sample" methodology has limited value. Any inference which might be drawn from the testimony of the government's "sample" witnesses can be rebutted by the employer presenting testimony of an equal number of employees who did not work off the clock. The inference, thus rebutted, leaves the government in the position of having to bring into court to testify each person on behalf of whom the government seeks back pay. The government generally will be reluctant to engage in such

an investment of time and resources—especially if the potential back pay claims—per employee—are not great.

Beyond this, the legal issues will not be clear cut.

In short, in negotiations the employer should focus solely upon the back wage claims, less applicable credits or offsets and without any provision for interest or liquidated damages.

Miscellaneous settlement principles

Once a figure has been reached which is acceptable to the employer and to the government, the employer should:

- Request that the agreed-to back wage payments be made in installments paid over time. The government negotiators tend to be quite flexible regarding installment payments. Payments spread over two or three years obviously can lessen the financial burden to the employer.
- During pre-litigation settlement negotiations, do not agree that when an ex-employee cannot be located his or her unpaid back wages will automatically be placed in the United States Treasury. The government usually will insist upon such a provision once a lawsuit has been filed but usually will not insist upon it in pre-litigation negotiated settlements. If an agreement can be reached prior to litigation, such a provision could save the employer a significant amount of money.
- Do not agree to any "consent judgment" unless absolutely essential. This issue should only present itself in post-litigation settlement negotiations. Competent management labor relations counsel can advise regarding whether a settlement is possible without entry of a consent judg-

ment. The position of government lawyers on the issue seems to vary from regional office to regional office. All regional offices will settle certain post-litigation cases without consent judgments and with only a "stipulation of compliance."

The primary risk in signing a consent judgment is that many courts would hold that by doing so the employer has waived the FLSA two year/three-year limitations period for subsequent violations. If the government subsequently uncovered any violations, the government could seek a finding of contempt and an award of back wages over the entire period of time that violations occurred unlimited by the FLSA limitations period.

Conclusion

The Fair Labor Standards Act appears very straightforward in certain of its major provisions, but it is actually quite complex. Some provisions are not only mysterious to restaurant owners who must comply with the law but also are equally foreign to many lawyers who do not specialize in labor law. This article was intended to provide some of the most important principles that the restaurant owner should know about when faced with government FLSA demands. In no fashion is it intended as a substitute for competent management labor relations counsel.

Editor's note: The opinions expressed in the article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect NRA views.

If you have any questions about this article or are seeking other foodservice-related legal information contact the NRA Law Department in Washington, DC.

Fisher's Law #52

The Corporate Culture

Recently there has been growing interest in, and attention to, a business management concept known as the "corporate culture." As business organizations grow, mature and become recognized as social institutions as well as economic institutions, it becomes worthwhile to examine the philosophical underpinnings and codes of conduct that vest a business enterprise with its identity and image.

There are also counter-cultures, i.e., groups of people who reject or disregard the larger culture that surrounds them. The "underground economy" is one such example.

Current management research and conventional business wisdom indicate that organizations that have a stated culture, integrate it through all levels and throughout all areas of the company, as opposed to

"A corporate culture personifies and personalizes a business entity. It offers feeling, caring, emotion, enthusiasm, passion. Cultivate a corporate culture!"

(Identity is what you think of yourself; image is what others perceive you to be.)

What is culture? There are many definitions, but I suggest that a "culture" is the system of accepted belief and behavioral patterns characteristic of a group of people bound together by a common interest and/or in pursuit of a common goal that reflect the enshrined values and the stage of advancement of the group at any given point in time.

Infants are born into a social culture; employees are welcomed into an organizational culture.

Sub-cultures are smaller, specialized components of the larger culture. In society, singles and senior citizens are two examples of sub-cultures. In organizations, "those accountants" and "those sales types" may well be representative of sub-cultures.

giving it lip service, tend to be more successful, across every measure, than firms that are devoid of a stated culture or regard it only as a "piece of paper."

If you think I'm headed toward recommending the structuring and thorough dissemination of a "culture" for your organization if one does not already exist, you are correct. While I would not presume to do it for you, I can give you an example, a model.

Here it is. As you can see, it doesn't need to be elaborate. Insert the name of your organization at the beginning of each step.

"1. _____ was founded on the belief in, and is dedicated to enhancing, the dignity of the individual as expressed through meaningful work devoted to the service of others.

2. _____ believes in establishing and maintaining relationships with customers, employees, purveyors and all other members of the public, predicated on the highest standards of integrity, professionalism and fairness.

3. _____ believes in the provision of quality products, services, performance and responsiveness.

4. _____ believes in conducting business activities on a profitable basis to allow for growth of the enterprise, growth of our employees and increased patronage, as well as recognition and respect by the public as a responsible corporate citizen interested in and contributing to the welfare of the community."

I am sure you can add to, delete from or revise the foregoing example, but the purpose is to suggest how you can adopt a corporate culture statement. Such a statement should be the essence of your corporate existence. It should permeate your organization, serving as the value framework within which decisions are made. It should be inculcated in all your employees to give significance to their responsibilities, so that they exude an enthusiasm with customers and with each other for the mutual benefit of every person within the organizational orbit. As Fisher's 52nd law states: "A corporate culture personifies and personalizes a business entity. It offers feeling, caring, emotion, enthusiasm, passion. Cultivate a corporate culture!"

WINNERS

in the 1984 Great Menu Contest

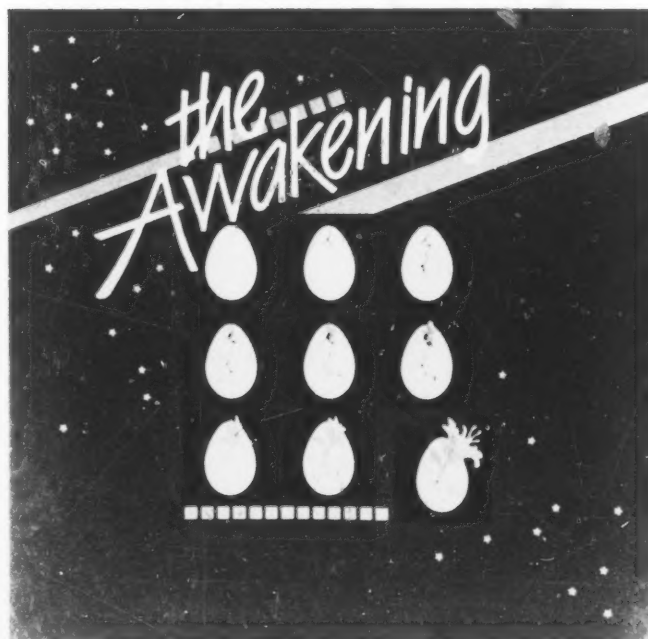
The grand prize winner in the 21st annual Great Menu Contest is the breakfast menu from Raffles (Creative Restaurants, Inc. in Miami, FL). Appropriately called *The Awakening*, the outside of the menu creates a feeling of anticipation. Printed on laminated paper with a royal blue background and white lettering, there are nine pictures of an egg progressively hatching—not a chicken—but a flower. The visual effect is one of pleasant expectation and surprise.

Inside, primary colors of red, blue and green on an eye-soothing gray merchandise breakfast offerings of omelets, benedicts, quiche, crepes, breakfast favorites, side dishes, desserts and beverages and a selection of specials. The menu is easy-to-read, and the descriptions are informative but not overly verbose.

For example, under the benedicts, the "Sardou" is described as "poached eggs with artichoke hearts and creamed spinach." In like manner, the "chicken salad croissant" is described as "a sandwich of freshly cooked chicken, raisins and walnuts, garnished with fresh fruit."

Overall, the judges were impressed by *The Awakening's* clean, easy-to-read attractiveness, its simple sophistication and its ability to carry out its theme.

The seven judges in the Great Menu Contest evaluated the entries on the basis of imagination, design and merchandising power. They agreed that the menu should sell food effectively, represent the restaurant to



"This menu accomplished exactly what it wanted to. It showed great imagination, and it is practical, attractive and entertaining," said John Rosson, one of the contest judges. A second judge, Steve Kraft, added that wonderful visual restraint was exercised by the menu. "If the drawing were colored in, it would be more attractive but less practical. By giving the children crayons, you make them happy and keep them occupied at the same time."

Hospital menu says, "We care about you" . . .

Although a hospital may have a captive clientele, the menu can still be an award-winning effort as demonstrated by the Presbyterian Intercommunity Hospital in Whittier, CA. This 16-page menu with line drawings took the third grand prize in this year's Great Menu Contest. The easy-to-handle horizontal format tempts even the weakest of appetites with delicious sounding selections. For example, for lunch one can choose "honey glazed Cornish game hen" described as "one half of a plump juicy hen gently painted with a special coating of our honey glaze. Baked slowly to keep in all the moisture and roasted to a golden brown" or BBQ short ribs "gently simmered . . . like you've cooked them outdoors" or "blue Pacific seafood salad plate" described as "a mixture of the sparkling blue Pacific waters catch heaped in a generous mountain, tossed gently in our own tasty seafood dressing."

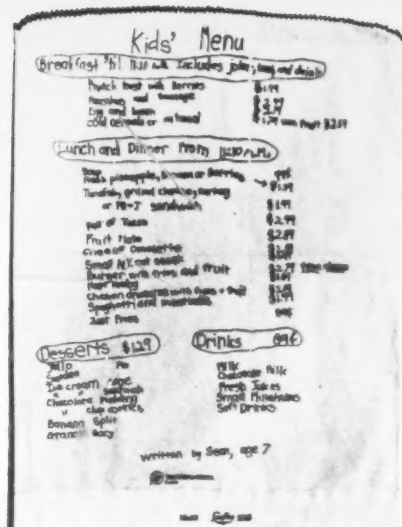
its best advantage and favorably impress patrons.

A menu must also appeal to its audience. That is why the second grand prize was awarded to the Market Cafe Restaurant at the Westin Hotel in Seattle, WA, for its children's menu.

Children's menu gets second grand prize . . .

Printed in black ink on a white paper bag, one side shows a drawing of a mother and child walking past a fruit and vegetable stand with a sign overhead that says, "Color me at the market."

On the other side of the bag, in a child's handwriting is the menu, listing breakfast, lunch, dinner, dessert and drink items. But for a child, the best part of this menu might be inside the bag. Here the young diner will find two balloons, crayons and an artist's smock—which can double as a bib without being too obvious.



The menu includes light offerings, desserts, vegetable selections and a description of dietary goals as well as a guide to good eating. As judge Audrey Garvey observes, "This menu has done a good job of relating the message, 'We care about you.'"

Menu designs should hold the patrons' interest, the judges maintain. The menu should be a pleasure to behold, easy to handle and easy to read—even in dim lighting. The menu should be clear, straightforward and descriptive. The menu should be consistent in its theme and targeted to the customer. In short, the menu should work as a marketing tool.

—Carol Caprione

The judges of the 21st Annual Great Menu Contest were
Audrey Garvey, creative director, *Restaurants and Institutions* magazine, Chicago, IL
John Gruner, John Gruner Solutions, Grand Rapids, MI
Steve Kraft, Smithsonian press designer, Washington, DC
Maurice Minno, Management/Design Resources, Fairfax, VA
John Rosson, *Washington Times*, Washington, DC
Carole Sugarman, *Washington Post*, Washington, DC
Marilyn Worseldine, freelance designer, Washington, DC

1984 Great Menu Contest Winners

Grand prize winners

First

Raffles
Creative Restaurants, Inc.
Miami, FL 33269

Second

Market Cafe Restaurant
Westin Hotel, Seattle
Seattle, WA 98101

Third

Presbyterian Intercommunity Hospital
Whittier, CA 90602

Average check under \$5 per person

First

Chancery Pub & Restaurant
Wauwatosa, WI 53213

Second

D'Lites of America, Inc.
Norcross, GA 30092

Third

Grinders & Such
Grinders Deluxe, Inc.
Paris, OH 44669

Average check \$5-10 per person

First

TGI Friday's (Culinary Impressions)
Dallas, TX 75380

Second

TGI Friday's (Summer '83)
Dallas, TX 75380

Third

TGI Friday's (Sunday Brunch)
Dallas, TX 75380

Average check over \$10

First

Maggie Mae's
43 Skdoo Corp.
Pittsburgh, PA 15205

Second

Fedora Cafe and Bar
Gilbert/Robinson, Inc.
Kansas City, MO 64112

Third

American Harvest Restaurant
Vista International Hotel
Washington, DC 20005

Specialty

First

TGI Friday's (Directory of Specialties)
Dallas, TX 75380

Second

Plata Grande Restaurant
Beltsville, MD 20705

Third

Nipper's
International Source
Management, Inc.
Santa Barbara, CA 93108

Banquet/Catering

First

Le Centre Sheraton
Les Associes Shermas
Montreal, (Quebec) H3B 2L7

Second

Sheraton Charleston Hotel
Charleston, SC 29403

Third

Colonial Country Club
Fort Worth, TX 76109

Institutional

First

Providence Medical Center
Portland, OR 97213

Second

Edward Hospital
Naperville, IL 60566

Third

St. Elizabeth's Hospital
Chicago, IL 60622

Most imaginative

First

Beaudry's
The Westin Bonaventure
Los Angeles, CA 90071

Second

Harvey's Restaurant
Lutherville, MD 21093

Third

Le Centre Sheraton
Les Associes Shermas
Montreal, (Quebec) H3B 2L7

Best design

First

Ravel
The Sheraton Grande Hotel
Los Angeles, CA 90071

Second

Vicorp Specialty Restaurants
San Diego, CA 92112

Third

Schuler's
Marshall, MI 49068

Greatest merchandising power

First

International House of Pancakes
Restaurants Inc.
North Hollywood, CA 91605

Second

Wag's Restaurant (centerfold)
Walgreen's Company
Deerfield, IL 60015

Third

Blom's
The Westin Hotel, Galleria Dallas
Dallas, TX 75240

FOOD TRENDS DSERVICE

Breakfast business is booming

by Cecelia Niepold

For many restaurateurs opportunities during the breakfast period are rising. Breakfast sales and traffic are not only growing steadily, they are also outpacing overall industry growth.

According to the CREST Family Report, breakfast traffic jumped 42.5 percent between 1977 and 1983, while overall industry traffic advanced only 3.8 percent. Breakfast is also capturing a higher percentage of total customer traffic. In 1977, breakfast accounted for 6.2 percent of total restaurant traffic. By 1983, this proportion had increased to 8.5 percent.

Breakfast growth has accelerated rapidly within the last year. During the last half of 1983, breakfast traffic jumped 15 percent—significantly higher than the 2.7 percent gain reported for total restaurant traffic. In addition, breakfast sales were up 18 percent—twice as strong as the nine percent increase posted by the total industry.

All these numbers add up to one basic fact—breakfast is a growing meal period that can offer lucrative opportunities for restaurateurs. This article highlights the major components of the breakfast market and answers some of the questions restaurateurs may have about the morning meal, such as

- Who's eating breakfast out?
- Where are they eating?
- When do people eat breakfast out?



- Which breakfast items are ordered most frequently?
- Is breakfast a good value?

Who is eating breakfast out? . . .

Some consumer groups seem more likely to dine out for breakfast than others. For instance, according to data from the new CREST Household Report,* more 35 to 49-year-olds chose to eat breakfast away from home in 1983 than did other age groups. Almost one in four breakfast patrons were in this age bracket. More than one in five customers were between 25 and 34 years old, and a similar proportion were 50 to 64 years old. A smaller percentage of patrons—one in 10—was over 64 years old, and only 8.1

percent was between 18 and 24 years old. Since most consumers between 25 and 64 years old work, the differential among the age groups may indicate that people who work are more likely to stop for breakfast in a restaurant than people who do not work.

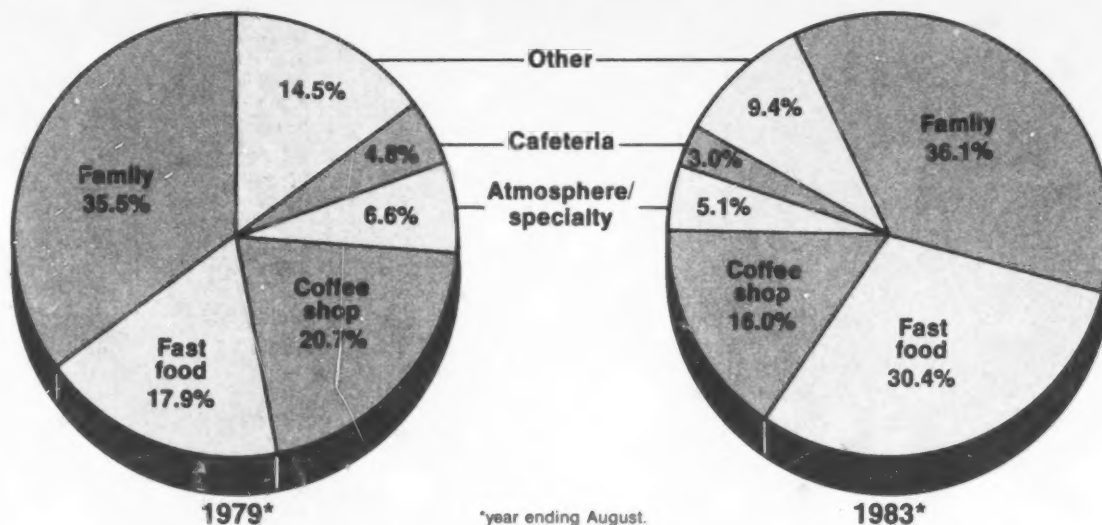
Although senior citizens don't eat breakfast out as often as some other age groups, they are more consistent breakfast eaters and could potentially become regular breakfast patrons. According to NRA's *Meal Consumption Behavior Study*, senior citizens are not likely to skip breakfast—only nine percent of this group reported missing breakfast one or more times a week—the lowest percentage among the age groups.

* This article utilizes information from both the CREST Household Report and the CREST Family Report. The CREST Household Report includes singles and non-related people living in the same house and is a recently developed CREST product. The regular Family Report (produced since 1977) has been used in this article to demonstrate long-term trends. Because it does not include singles and non-related households, the Family data may slightly understate breakfast's actual growth rate.

Several reasons why breakfast is booming

- **Maximizes hours**—More restaurateurs are realizing that breakfast offers an opportunity to expand service.
- **Minimal costs**—Start-up costs for the breakfast meal period can be small compared to potential gains. Breakfast food costs are also relatively low, which can contribute to bottom line profits.
- **Convenience**—Breakfast offers people on the go an easy alternative to cooking at home—a convenience many consumers desire.
- **Business breakfast**—More business people are taking advantage of morning meetings as they don't interfere with the rest of the working day.
- **Health concerns**—Consumers have become increasingly conscious of their health and diets. Starting off the day with a healthy breakfast is part of this trend.
- **Working women**—More women are bringing home the bacon rather than frying it. Breakfast away from home can be an important convenience for this group.

Percentage of breakfast traffic by restaurant types



Source: CREST, NPD, Inc. (Family Report, September '79-August '83)

To capture more of this market, restaurateurs may want to offer a special breakfast promotion geared toward customers over 65 years old.

Employment factors also seem to affect breakfast dining out habits. A third of the respondents who reported eating breakfast out were members of two career households. Fewer customers—28.5 percent—were members of one-earner households. Consumers who were not employed (usually retired individuals) were even less likely to eat breakfast out—only 15.3 percent.

Breakfast eating out patterns also differ by household size. The majority of breakfast patrons were members of two person households—more than a third. Slightly fewer—32.2 percent—were members of three and four person households. Almost a quarter of the breakfast customers were single householders, while only 11.7

percent were members of households with five or more persons.

Income levels also appear to play a role in breakfast eating out habits. The largest proportion of breakfast customers earned more than \$30,000 a year—35.1 percent. More than a quarter of the patrons earned between \$20,000 and \$29,999. And, a similar proportion was in the \$10,000 to \$19,999 bracket. Only a small percentage—12.4 percent—earned less than \$10,000 a year.

Where do customers eat breakfast? . . .

According to the CREST Family Report, family restaurants capture most of the breakfast traffic. During the September '82 to August '83 period, 36.1 percent of all breakfast customers chose to eat their morning meal at a family restaurant. Family restaurants accounted for an even larger share of the total breakfast dollar—almost half. These

restaurants have slightly increased their share of the breakfast market over the last several years and, consequently, breakfast has become a more important meal period in this type of restaurant. In 1979, 10.5 percent of all family restaurant patrons were morning customers. By 1983, this proportion had increased to 11.9 percent.

Fast food restaurants account for the second largest share of the breakfast market, and they're quickly catching up with family restaurants. In 1983, fast food restaurants captured 30.4 percent of all morning customers and 23.6 percent of the total breakfast dollars. In 1979, fast food establishments accounted for a much smaller 17.9 percent of the breakfast traffic and only 14.4 percent of total breakfast sales. This increase is a reflection of the growing number of fast food chains that have started offering the morning meal.

Americans also eat

breakfast quite often at coffee shops. In 1983, 16 percent of all breakfast patrons dined at coffee shops, and 12.7 percent of the total breakfast dollars was spent at these establishments. Even so, coffee shops have lost some of their breakfast market share. In 1979, coffee shops accounted for almost 21 percent of the breakfast traffic and 17.5 percent of all breakfast sales. This decline is probably due to increased competition from fast food restaurants; although more CREST diary panelists may be perceiving coffee shops as family restaurants today than in the early years of CREST, contributing to the declining market share. Among the various restaurant types, breakfast accounts for the largest portion of overall business at coffee shops. In 1983, a third of most coffee shop sales dollars was generated by the breakfast meal.

Atmosphere/specialty restaurants captured only

5.1 percent of the breakfast traffic and 8.1 percent of total breakfast sales in 1983. Generally, breakfast has not been a major meal period for most upscale restaurants. For instance, in 1983, breakfast traffic accounted for only 3.4 percent of all the patrons at these establishments and two percent of total sales. Even though these figures are low, breakfast offers upscale restaurant operators a variety of opportunities for expansion.

Are takeout items popular at breakfast? . . .

Examining where Americans eat breakfast wouldn't be complete without taking a look at takeout breakfast activity. Although most breakfasts are eaten inside a restaurant, consumers' continuing desire for convenience and quick foods has increased the demand for takeout breakfast items. Even though it is still a relatively small market, many restaurants are promoting quick breakfast foods that can easily be taken out.

According to the CREST Household Report, more than one in five breakfast customers purchased breakfast food to go in 1983. Of that percentage, most people—6.7 percent—took their breakfast to work.

Interestingly, according to a Gallup study, female workers are much more apt to buy breakfast to go. Among the female respondents who indicated they had eaten breakfast on the previous day, one in 10 purchased food to eat at work. On the other hand, only one percent of the male respondents took their breakfast to work.

When asked what they were doing before they visited a restaurant for breakfast, not surprisingly, the majority of customers were at home—55.6 percent. A large percentage—11.8 per-

cent—reported being at work, and a significant proportion of consumers said they were traveling or vacationing. Almost eight percent of respondents were business travelers and 10.6 percent were on vacation. Interestingly, the proportion of business travelers or vacationers that ate lunch or dinner away from home was much smaller. This indicates that travelers can be a particularly good target market for the breakfast meal.

Looking at individual days of the week shows that weekends are especially popular for eating breakfast away from home. In 1983, one in five customers reported dining out on a Saturday or Sunday. Weekday traffic was fairly equally divided, with Monday and Friday accounting for slightly more of the breakfast traffic.

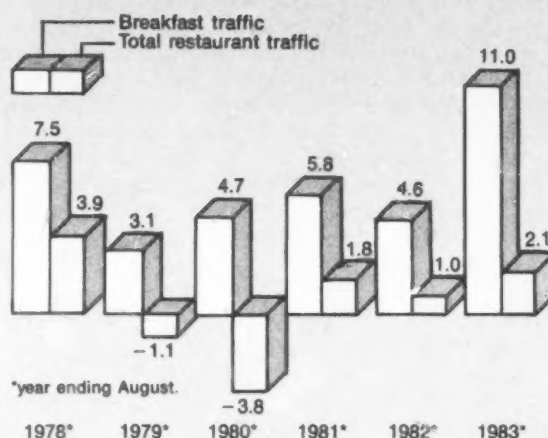
What do consumers eat when dining out for breakfast? . . .

Eggs seem to be the all-American favorite breakfast food. According to the CREST Household Report, four out of 10 consumers ordered eggs or omelets for breakfast when dining out in 1983.

A smaller proportion of breakfast customers—17.5 percent—ordered pancakes, waffles or French toast. Donuts and sweet rolls also seem to be relatively popular breakfast items and were requested at 15.5 percent of breakfast occasions. Breakfast sandwiches, which are being offered by an increasing number of restaurants, were ordered at 14.6 percent of breakfast occasions. This percentage will probably increase as more establishments offer more sandwiches for breakfast.

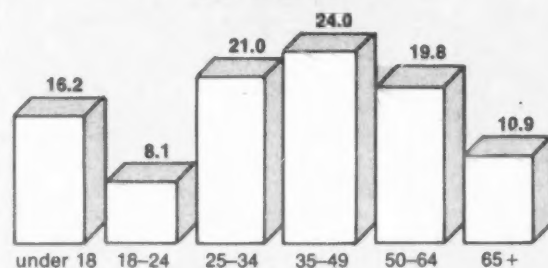
Bacon and sausage are popular, with 26 percent of customers ordering these

Percent change in breakfast and total restaurant traffic



Source: CREST, NPD Research, Inc. (Family Report September 1977–August 1983)

Percentage of breakfast patrons by age groups



Source: CREST, NPD Research, Inc. (Household Report November '82–December '83)

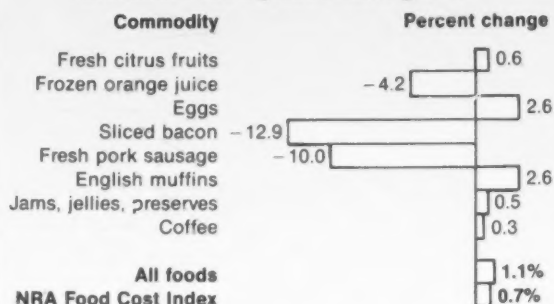
items with their breakfast meal. Potatoes (other than french fries) are also a frequent choice. In 1983, 17.7 percent of the customers requested potatoes with their breakfast.

Fruit and cereal are less popular and were ordered by only 2.4 percent and 1.4 percent of customers.

According to a Gallup study in the October 1981 *Gallup Monthly Report on Eating Out*, consumer breakfast preferences vary by age. For example, younger respondents are more likely to order substantial breakfasts, such as eggs and pancakes. When

asked to name their favorite breakfast foods when dining out, almost one in three 18 to 24-year-olds named pancakes as a top breakfast choice, compared to only 14 percent of the 50-year-old-and-over group. On the other hand, older customers seem to prefer lighter breakfasts. Eleven percent of the respondents over 50 years old indicated they liked to order cereal in a restaurant versus only three percent of the consumers under 50 years of age. Restaurateurs, when targeting the older consumer segment, may want to offer lighter breakfast specials

Percent change in wholesale breakfast food prices during 1983



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Producer Price Index; NRA

and entrees.

Coffee is easily the most popular breakfast beverage. According to CREST data, coffee is ordered on more than half of all breakfast occasions. Fruit juices are the number two choice. Almost one in five consumers ordered juice with their breakfast meal. Milk was requested by a much smaller proportion—8.3 percent. Tea and soft drinks were ordered least often.

The Gallup study also shows that breakfast beverage preferences vary by age. For instance, older consumers are most likely to order coffee with their breakfast. Six out of 10 consumers over 35 years old indicated they would order coffee, compared with a smaller 42 percent of the 25 to 34-year-old group and only 16 percent of the 18 to 24-year-old segment.

Is breakfast a good value? . . .

Most consumers feel that breakfast offers a very good value for the price paid. In fact, an NRA-sponsored question in the December 1982 *Gallup Monitor of Eating Away from Home* revealed that breakfast received higher price/value ratings than either lunch or dinner. (For complete results of this survey, see the

April 1983 issue of **NRA NEWS**.)

According to the survey, three out of four respondents rated breakfast as an excellent or good value. In comparison, the dinner and lunch periods were given similar ratings by only 62 percent and 61 percent of consumers.

Breakfast offers a good value for both consumers and restaurateurs. Breakfast entrees are relatively inexpensive, which pleases customers; and breakfast costs for restaurateurs are also comparatively low. This is because wholesale prices for breakfast commodities are basically low and generally stable. For instance, even though the price of eggs has recently jumped, a restaurateur can still produce quite a few scrambled eggs or omelets at a very low food cost.

Looking at the changes in wholesale prices for breakfast commodities during 1983 shows that breakfast foods were generally a good buy last year. For example, frozen orange juice prices declined 4.2 percent during the year, and prices for sliced bacon dropped 12.9 percent. English muffin prices rose only 2.6 percent, and the wholesale coffee price increased a very slight 0.3 percent.

Top target groups for breakfast

To help restaurateurs pinpoint the consumer groups most likely to eat breakfast in their particular establishment, here is a summary of highlights from NRA's recently published *Consumer Expectation Study*. It is based on responses to the question, "Which meal do you usually eat at a (restaurant type)? Responses apply to family and fast food operations only; an insignificant percentage of respondents reported eating breakfast at an upscale/atmosphere restaurant.

Family restaurants

- **Men**—More than nine percent of male respondents said they usually ate the breakfast meal in family restaurants versus 6.2 percent of the females.
- **Singles**—More than one in 10 singles indicated breakfast was their usual meal at a family restaurant—much more than the 7.6 percent total average.
- **Young people**—Approximately one in 10 of the 25 to 34-year-old and 18 to 24-year-old respondents reported eating breakfast in a

family restaurant.

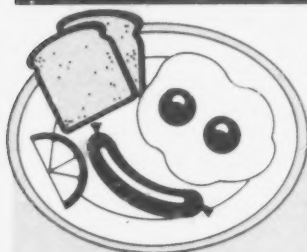
- **Upper income households**—A substantial 13.5 percent of the households earning more than \$35,000 a year indicated they usually choose to eat the morning meal at a family restaurant.

Fast food restaurants

- **Men**—Almost twice as many men (4.3 percent) than women (2.4 percent) said their usual meal in a fast food restaurant was breakfast.
- **Singles**—More than six percent of the singles usually visit a fast food establishment for breakfast—almost double the 3.3 percent total average.
- **Non-working households**—Approximately eight percent of the non-working households (primarily retired senior citizens) usually choose to eat breakfast at fast food restaurants.
- **Senior citizens and 35-44 year olds**—Almost nine percent of the over 65-year-old segment and 6.4 percent of the 35 to 44-year-old group usually eat breakfast at fast food restaurants.
- **Upper income households**—Almost six percent of the households earning more than \$35,000 a year usually dine at fast food establishments for breakfast.

Tips for capturing more breakfast business

- Cater to the business crowd. Emphasize quick service and available meeting facilities.
- Provide discounts to senior citizens.
- Offer takeout breakfast specials geared toward busy working people. Provide commuters with special no-spill coffee cups.
- Provide free coffee refills or juice. Offer morning newspapers.
- Add a breakfast buffet or a breakfast topping bar with different syrups, sauces for omelets and fresh fruit.
- Offer breakfast sandwich combinations. Consider using biscuits, croissants or tortillas.
- Emphasize the nutritional value of breakfast.



Breakfast—a healthy way to start off the day

Studies have proven that people work more efficiently and can concentrate and learn better when they've fueled their bodies for the day ahead. More consumers are thinking seriously about the foods they choose to "break their fast," and restaurateurs can boost their breakfast business by emphasizing nutrition.

It is more difficult to achieve the proper balance of calories and nutrients without breakfast. Because there are no specific "right or wrong" breakfast foods, restaurateurs have the flexibility to offer a wide variety of foods to tempt their morning customers.

Variety is usually the key to success. A simple guideline would be to include foods from the following groups: fruits/vegetables, breads/cereals, milk/yogurt/cheese and meat/poultry/fish.

Muffins, individual cereals, fresh fruit, juices, milk, yogurt, peanut butter, hard boiled eggs and cheeses are some food ideas that can be offered to go.

Breakfast offers a wide variety of options—breakfast bars, buffets, breakfast sandwiches or even simple eggs and bacon. No matter how you choose to coordinate your breakfast menu, breakfast can be a healthy way for both your restaurant and your customers to start off the day.

—Karen Sherwood, R.D.

NRA publishes study on ethnic food usage in restaurants

Ethnic food items in restaurants continue to be very popular, and as a result restaurant operators have asked questions concerning the usage of ethnic foods in

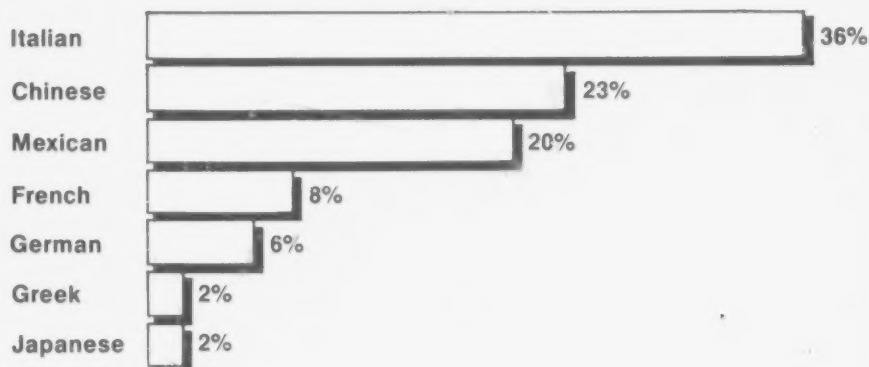
eating establishments, such as

- Which ethnic foods are most popular?
- Who orders ethnic foods in restaurants?
- How frequently do consumers order ethnic foods when dining away from home?
- How likely are consumers to order ethnic foods in the future?

• Do consumers want to see more ethnic items on restaurant menus? The National Restaurant Association's latest consumer attitude and behavior study, *Consumer Preferences for Ethnic Foods in Restaurants*, provides answers to these questions.

NRA's new research study reveals that Italian food is the best known,

Ethnic food liked best in restaurants



NOTE: Preferences based on percentage of respondents stating which ethnic food is their most liked.

Source: *Consumer Preferences for Ethnic Foods in Restaurants*, National Restaurant Association

Popularity and use of ethnic foods in restaurants

Ethnic food	General use	Frequency of use	Likelihood of future use
Italian	Very high	Very frequent	Very likely
Chinese	Very high	Very frequent	Likely
Mexican	Very high	Very frequent	Likely
German	High	Frequent	Likely
French	High	Frequent	Likely
Greek	High	Frequent	Somewhat likely
Japanese	High	Frequent	Likely
Spanish	Somewhat high	Somewhat infrequent	Likely
British	Somewhat low	Somewhat infrequent	Somewhat likely
Eastern European	Somewhat low	Somewhat infrequent	Somewhat unlikely
Scandinavian	Low	Infrequent	Somewhat likely
Indian	Low	Infrequent	Somewhat unlikely
Other Oriental	Low	Infrequent	Likely
Latin American	Low	Infrequent	Somewhat likely
Middle Eastern	Low	Infrequent	Somewhat likely
Russian	Very low	Very infrequent	Unlikely
African	Very low	Very infrequent	Somewhat unlikely

Source: *Consumer Preferences for Ethnic Foods in Restaurants*, National Restaurant Association

most tried, most frequently ordered and most likely to be ordered again ethnic food in restaurants. Chinese and Mexican foods rank second and third in popularity and are followed by German, French, Greek and Japanese foods. The accompanying chart summarizes usage and popularity for 17 different types of ethnic foods.

The study also provides information on consumer attitudes about ethnic food offerings in restaurants. Generally, consumers exhibit high agreement with the following statements.

- I would try more ethnic dishes if they were available at restaurants.
- I wish more ethnic dishes were available at family style restaurants.
- I like to try items I have never eaten before when I eat out.

Order information . . .

For an indepth look at study results you can order NRA's *Consumer Preferences for Ethnic Foods in Restaurants*. It sells for \$15 for NRA members and \$30 for non-members plus an additional 10 percent for shipping and handling. Washington, DC, and Illinois residents must add a six percent sales tax to their totals. Chicago, IL, residents must add an additional one percent.

Payment must accompany all orders. Be sure to specify order number CS980 when placing an order with:

The National Restaurant Association
311 First Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20001.

Credit card telephone orders are accepted. Call (800) 424-5156 or (202) 638-6100.

Economic indicators

Every day a variety of economic factors affect the restaurant business. Statistics that reflect changes in wholesale food costs, consumer prices and overall wage and salary levels are several of the indicators foodservice operators should watch. Periodically, "Foodservice Trends" will

present updated figures in several of these areas to give restaurateurs an overview of the economic indicators that can affect their business.

This month's review includes a wage and salary survey and an operating statement. The wage and salary survey is designed to give operators a general idea of average salaries in one or more areas of the country. This particular sur-

vey reflects wages in five restaurants in the Atlanta, GA, area in early spring of this year.

The operating statement should help restaurateurs get a better idea of some of the general operating costs of various restaurant types. The operating statement reviewed here reports the operating costs of a limited menu restaurant in Tennessee.

Salary and wage survey Atlanta, GA—Spring 1984

Restaurant	# of seats	# of entrees	Unit manager	Asst. manager	Chef	Bartender	Diswasher	Busboy	Cash
# 1	500	20	N/A	\$ 11/hr.	\$ 20/hr.	\$5.25/hr.	\$4.00/hr.	\$3.50/hr.	\$5.00
# 2	70	12	N/A	\$350/wk.	N/A	\$4.50/hr.	\$3.75/hr.	\$2.01/hr.	\$4.00
# 3	115	6	\$307/wk.	\$250/wk.	\$450/wk.	\$225/wk.	\$3.35/hr.	\$3.35/hr.	N/A
# 4	185	17	\$650/wk.	\$500/wk.	N/A	\$4.25/hr.	\$5.50/hr.	\$3.35/hr.	N/A
# 5	90	15	\$380/wk.	\$265/wk.	N/A	N/A	\$3.96/hr.	N/A	\$3.96

Food cost changes, 1982-1984

Commodity	1982 to 1983	Feb. '83 to Feb. '84	2 mos. '83 to 2 mos. '84	Jan. '84 to Feb. '84
Bakery products	3.2%	7.7%	5.8%	0.7%
Flour and cereal	1.1	2.4	2.1	-0.3
Beef and veal	-3.3	5.6	5.3	2.9
Other meats	-8.7	-9.0	-8.4	-2.9
Pork	-9.6	-10.2	-9.5	-4.1
Poultry and eggs	3.2	32.9	34.6	nc
Poultry	3.4	20.6	22.5	0.4
Eggs	2.6	65.1	65.6	-0.6
Fish and shellfish	6.3	-8.6	-2.0	-6.1
Sugar and sweets	5.0	3.2	3.6	0.3
Sugar	8.2	5.0	5.5	0.5
Vegetables	1.2	43.0	36.6	8.2
Fresh vegetables	1.0	72.0	61.1	12.2
Fruits and juices	2.9	7.3	6.1	2.7
Fresh fruit	6.4	2.2	3.3	-0.3
Beverages	1.3	3.8	3.2	0.9
Dairy products	0.6	-1.0	-0.9	nc
Fats and oils	8.8	25.6	27.3	-1.9
NRA Food Cost Index	0.7%	6.1%	6.6%	0.5%
All Food, Producer Price Index¹	1.1%	6.1%	6.2%	0.7%

¹Includes all processed foods (except soft drinks, alcoholic beverages and animal feeds) plus eggs and fresh and dried fruits and vegetables

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Producer Price Index, March 1984 NRA

Consumer price changes

	1981 to 1982	1982 to 1983	2 mos. '83 to 2 mos. '84
Food away from home	5.3%	4.4%	4.1%
Food at home	3.4%	1.1%	4.3%
All items	6.8%	3.2%	4.3%
All items less food	6.6%	3.4%	4.4%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index, March 1984

Labor cost changes

	1981 to 1982	1982 to 1983	Jan. 83 ^P to Jan. 84
Average weekly earnings	-7.0%	4.5%	4.3%
Average weekly hours	nc*	0.4%	1.2%

^Pprojected

*no change

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment and Earnings, March 1984

Sales changes

	1981 to 1982	1982 to 1983*	1983 to 1984*
Total industry			
current dollars	6.5%	8.2%	8.9%
real dollars	1.1%	3.7%	3.5%
Commercial group			
current dollars	6.6%	8.7%	9.3%
real dollars	1.3%	4.3%	4.0%
Eating places			
current dollars	7.8%	9.4%	9.8%
real dollars	2.4%	5.1%	4.5%

*Forecast

Source: National Restaurant Association

Operating Statement*

	June 1982 to May 1983
Sales	
Food sales	67.0%
Liquor sales	33.0%
Total sales	100.0%
Cost of sales	
Food	32.5%
Liquor	22.0%
Total cost of sales	29.0%
Gross profit on sales	
Food	34.4%
Liquor	11.0%
Total gross profit	71.0%
Other income	1.0%
Total income	72.0%
Controllable expenses	
Payroll	23.5%
Employee benefits	2.4%
Direct operating expenses	5.9%
Music and entertainment	0.2%
Advertising and promotion	6.1%
Utilities	3.7%
Administrative and general	6.1%
Repairs and maintenance	1.7%
Total controllable expenses	49.6%
Profit before occupation costs, interest and depreciation	22.4%
Occupation costs	
Rent	3.8%
Property taxes	0.8%
Other taxes	2.5%
Property insurance	0.8%
Total occupation costs	7.9%
Income before interest and depreciation	14.5%
Interest	5.0%
Depreciation	6.7%
Other deductions	2.7%
Net income before federal income taxes	0.1%

*These percentages are based on total food and liquor sales except for the cost of food sold and the cost of liquor sold, which are percentages of their respective sales



December-January-February

CREST REPORT

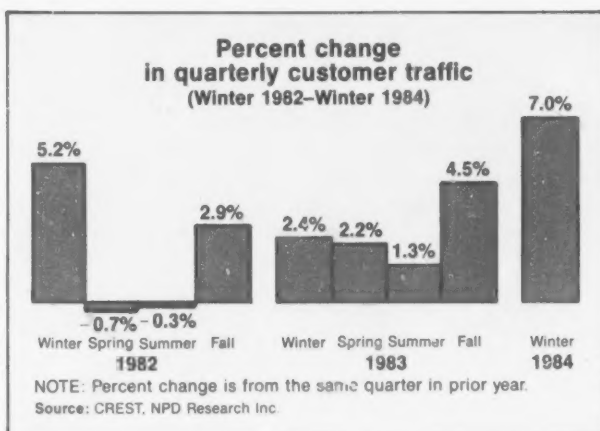
CREST Highlights

- Customer counts at the nation's restaurants leaped 7.0 percent in the winter quarter of 1984, marking the best winter quarter performance in the history of CREST.
- During the December-January-February period, visit frequency rose a substantial 3.3 percent over last year, and the proportion of families eating out increased to 77.8 percent—up from 76.9 percent during the same period in 1983.
- Sales continued to move upward in the winter, rising 10.7 percent. This compares with an 8.5 percent and 9.3 percent increase during the fall and summer of 1983, respectively.
- The average check size was up only 3.4 percent versus larger advances in the prior two quarters of 3.9 percent and 7.9 percent.
- Restaurant operators are continuing to use promotions as a means of building customer traffic, but the level of usage this winter quarter was the same as last year—12.9 percent.
- Family restaurants continue to do well, posting a 10.6 percent increase in traffic during the winter quarter. Growth at fast food and atmosphere specialty restaurants was also significant.
- Traffic at the evening meal rose a substantial 11.7 percent during the December-January-February period. Breakfast and lunch customer counts also advanced—7.2 percent and 6.2 percent, respectively.

Customer traffic leaps 7.0 percent . . .

The nation's restaurants have started 1984 by registering the best quarterly performance in more than five years. Customer counts leaped 7.0 percent during the months of December, January and February—the best traffic gain for any winter quarter in the history of CREST. The only quarter to surpass this traffic increase was the summer of 1978 when customer counts jumped 8.2 percent. In addition, the traffic gain in the first three months of 1984 is significantly better than the advances of the three prior quarters—4.5 percent in the fall, 1.3 percent in the summer and 2.2 percent last spring.

The continued robust recovery from the 1982 recession and growing consumer confidence contributed to the exceptionally strong upturn during the winter quarter. Factors, such as rising personal income, moderate inflation and expanded job opportunities, have all contributed to this brighter economic picture and have had a positive effect on the restaurant industry. For instance, the unemployment rate in February dropped to 7.8 percent—the lowest since September 1981. Personal income has also risen during each month of the quarter. According to the Commerce Department, personal in-



come rose 1.5 percent in January alone—the strongest one-month advance since August 1981. Inflation has remained moderate, posting a 4.2 percent average gain during the December-January-February period. Menu prices, as reflected in the food away from home index, rose 4.1 percent—slightly slower than the overall increase in consumer prices.

The picture looks increasingly bright for the restaurant industry during the remainder of 1984. NRA expects real eating place sales (adjusted for inflation) to advance 4.5 percent this year. The spring and summer months should be especially strong because of rising incomes and increased vacation activity.

Families dining out more often . . .

The traffic gain in the winter quarter was particu-

larly strong because more families were dining out, and they were doing so more often. The average number of times families visited restaurants—visit frequency—rose a healthy 3.3 percent during the December-January-February period. This compares with a small 1.5 percent gain during the fall, a slight 0.4 percent decline during the summer and a moderate 2.7 percent gain last spring. Nearly 78 percent of the families dined out at least once during the quarter—up nearly one percentage point from the same quarter last year.

An analysis of visit frequency and proportion of families dining out by restaurant type reveals that family restaurants experienced the largest gains. Visit frequency was up six percent, and the proportion of families dining out reached 49 percent—up from 47.4 percent. Fast food and atmosphere/specialty restaurants also registered gains in visit frequency—3.3 percent and 1.2 percent, respectively. In addition, the number of families dining out at these types of restaurants also rose.

These data support the assumption that the improved economic climate and general feeling of improved economic well-being by consumers resulted in

patrons being able to dine out more often at all types of restaurants.

Restaurant sales up 10.7 percent . . .

CREST sales continue to post strong gains—advancing 10.7 percent during the winter period. This compares with an 8.5 percent increase in the fall, a 9.3 percent gain in the summer and a 7.6 percent rise last spring.

Increases in the average expenditure for a restaurant meal or snack—per person check size—continue to moderate. During the winter quarter the average check size increased by 3.4 percent—down from 3.9 percent in the fall, 7.9 percent in the summer and 5.3 percent in the spring. The 3.4 percent increase in average check size is also lower than the 4.1 percent gain in menu prices recorded by the Consumer Price Index for food away from home during the months of December, January and February.

Promotion usage shows no yearly gain . . .

Restaurant operators are continuing to use promotions as a means of building customer traffic, but the level of usage did not increase during the winter quarter. In the December-January-February period, 12.9 percent of the meal occasions involved a promotion—the same percentage as one year earlier. Even so, promotional usage was up from the fall's 11.5 percent level, the spring's 11.0 percent rate and the summer's 9.9 percent level.

Looking at the use of promotions by restaurant type shows that fast food restaurants continue to use promotions more often than do other types of restaurants. During the winter quarter, promotions were

CREST data can be helpful to restaurateurs

The CREST information presented here can be useful to restaurateurs as a base for comparing their operations with industry performance nationally as well as with performance within their specific restaurant category (fast food, family, atmosphere/specialty restaurants). CREST data can also help monitor performance for specific meal periods and identify how segments will be affected by economic conditions. More detailed CREST information is available to NRA members through the research and information service department of the National Restaurant Association, 311 First Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20001.

used on 15.7 percent of the occasions at fast food places—down from 17.5 percent a year ago. Family restaurants and atmosphere/specialty restaurants also continue to rely on promotions. During the December-January-February period, patrons used promotions on 13.0 percent of family restaurant occasions and 12.5 percent of the atmosphere/specialty restaurant occasions. This compares with 11.8 percent and 10.9 percent, respectively, during the same period last year.

Family restaurants post highest traffic increase . . .

The traffic increases by restaurant type indicate that consumers are opting to visit all kinds of restaurants. Family restaurants again posted the largest traffic increase during the winter quarter. Fast food and atmosphere/specialty restaurants also posted some significant gains. However, traffic dropped at cafeterias and coffee shops.

Traffic rose a substantial 10.6 percent at family restaurants in the winter

quarter over the same period a year ago. This is considerably better than the impressive 7.0 percent advance posted in the fall. An above-average increase in the number of families visiting family restaurants and increased number of visits to such establishments helped boost traffic.

The per person check size at family restaurants rose only 2.4 percent during the winter quarter over the same quarter a year ago. This compares with a larger 3.4 percent average increase for all restaurants. Promotions were used on 13.0 percent of the occasions at this restaurant type versus 11.8 percent one year earlier. Minimal price increases and high promotional usage may have contributed to consumers perceiving a favorable price/value relationship for a meal at family restaurants, thus boosting traffic.

Customer counts at fast food establishments also increased significantly during the winter quarter—7.8 percent, the strongest gain in more than a year. A rise in the number of visits by patrons—3.3 percent—may

have contributed to the above-average growth.

The per person check size rose three percent at fast food restaurants in the winter—slightly below the 3.4 percent average for all restaurants. Promotional usage dropped at fast food establishments during the winter period. Promotions were used on 15.7 percent of the eating occasions, compared with 17.5 percent one year earlier.

Customer traffic at atmosphere/specialty restaurants also jumped in the winter quarter, posting a seven percent gain—the highest increase in more than a year. Consumers have gained confidence in both the economy and their personal economic situations and, consequently, are more likely to frequent upscale restaurants. This has added to the jump in customer traffic at these establishments.

Promotional usage continues to rise at atmosphere/specialty restaurants, which could also be a factor in the strong traffic growth. Promotions were used on 12.5 percent of the meal occasions during the months of

December, January and February—up from 10.9 percent of the occasions one year earlier. The per person check size rose only 2.5 percent during the winter quarter—well below the 3.4 percent average for all restaurants. This factor also may have contributed to the hefty traffic gains at upscale restaurants.

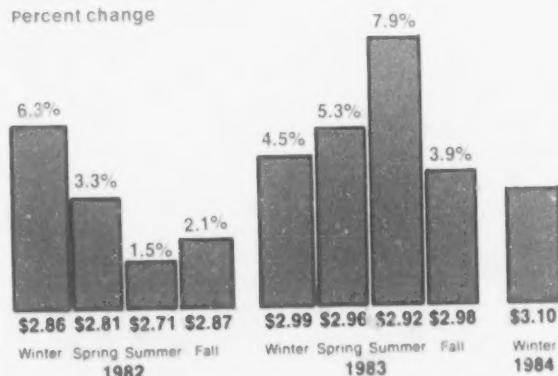
Coffee shops and cafeterias both reported decreases in customer traffic during the winter period. Both of these restaurant types reported a decrease in promotional usage, which may have contributed to their declining customer counts. Cafeterias also experienced a sharp increase in average check size and a strong drop in visit frequency, which probably added to the overall traffic decrease at cafeterias.

Dinner traffic jumps 11.7 percent . . .

Dinner traffic took off during the winter quarter, jumping 11.7 percent—the strongest increase in more than four years and more than double the 5.0 percent increase posted in the fall quarter. Improving consum-

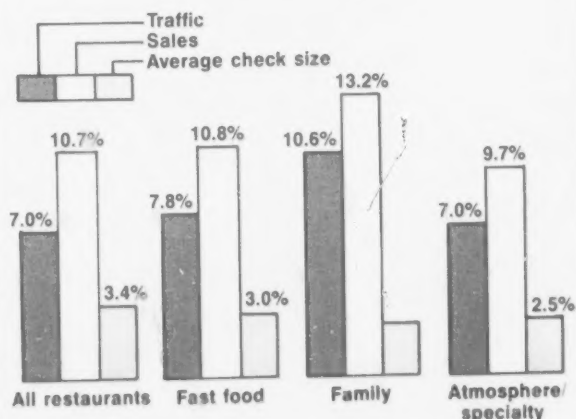
Average per person check*
(Winter 1982–Winter 1984)

Average check per eater
Percent change



*Based on average two-week period
NOTE: Percent change is from the same quarter in prior year
Source: CREST NPD Research, Inc.

Winter quarter performance by restaurant type



NOTE: Percent change is from the same quarter in prior year
Source: CREST NPD Research, Inc.

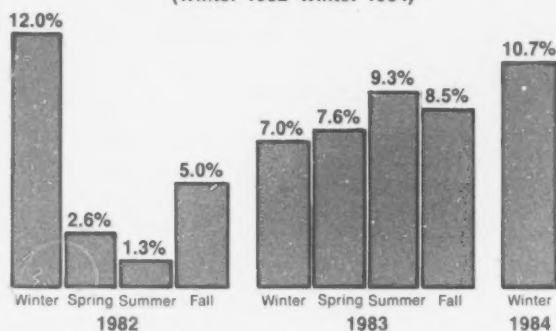
er confidence and spending levels probably contributed to the hefty gains. A substantial increase in visit frequency—4.9 percent—also helped boost traffic during the dinner period.

The average check size increased only 2.5 percent—well below the 3.4 percent average for all restaurants. This, along with a gain in promotional usage, may have added to the improved customer counts. Promotions were used on 18.5 percent of meal occasions during the winter period—up from 18.0 percent one year earlier.

Breakfast continues to post strong traffic gains. During the winter quarter, customer counts for the first meal of the day rose 7.2 percent. A significant increase in the number of families eating breakfast out, along with a moderate gain in visit frequency, probably contributed to the traffic gains.

The average check size

Percent change in quarterly CREST sales*
(Winter 1982–Winter 1984)



*Sales based on total U.S.; average for two-week period each quarter.

NOTE: Percent change is from the same quarter in prior year.

Source: CREST, NPD Research, Inc.

for the breakfast meal rose a slight 1.0 percent—significantly below the 3.4 percent average for all restaurants. Promotional usage remained fairly constant. During the winter quarter promotions were used on 10.4 percent of the occasions. This compares with a fairly similar 10.5 percent one year earlier.

The improving economy also has helped boost traffic

during the lunch period. During the winter quarter, lunch traffic jumped 6.2 percent—the strongest gain in more than four years. Improving employment opportunities have helped more people get back to work, which has probably contributed to rising traffic levels during the lunch period.

An increase in the number of families eating lunch away from home and

a modest gain in visit frequency may have also helped boost customer counts during this meal period. The average check size rose a moderate 2.9 percent—below the 3.4 percent average for all restaurants. Promotional usage during the lunch period dropped slightly from 10.9 percent in 1983 to 10.5 percent in the 1984 winter quarter.

Snacking occasions experienced a slight decrease in traffic—0.5 percent. This was due primarily to a drop in customer counts during the evening snack period. Even though visit frequency was up a strong 5.3 percent, the number of families choosing to eat a snack away from home dropped slightly. This, along with a decline in promotional usage, contributed to the overall traffic decrease. Promotions were used on 7.0 percent of snacking occasions—down from 7.9 percent one year earlier.

What is CREST?

Launched in September 1975, the CREST (Consumer Reports on Eating Share Trends) survey is designed to track expenditures and behavior in the commercial segment of the foodservice industry. While the study does track chain trends, it contains a great deal more data, including information by type and classification of restaurant and also by meal or snack period.

Some 10,000 families, or approximately 30,000 persons, participate in the study. They have been selected to represent the demographic patterns in the U.S. Each family is asked to record restaurant experiences for a particular two-week period for each of the four quarters during the year. Because the study is repetitive, it creates an excellent opportunity to follow changing trends.

In order to properly complete the CREST diary, several steps are involved. The first step requires that each household member make a daily entry for each meal during the two-week period. Whenever the code for restaurant purchases appears, the participant is asked to elaborate on the occasion by making further entries in the diary.

The second portion of the diary is used only if a household member ate or obtained food prepared away from home in establishments, such as restaurants, hotels and motels, fast food/drive-ins, delicatessens, re-

freshment stands, carryouts, coffee shops, donut shops, ice cream shops or eating places inside variety stores or other retail stores. The diary does not include any meals eaten at schools, hospitals, colleges or other institutional feeding places. When the two-week reporting period is complete, the diary is returned to NPD Research, Inc.

The CREST study is a joint effort of individual foodservice organizations, acting in concert to fund a study perhaps beyond the economic reach of any of the individual participants. NRA is a participant in this study and not a sponsor. Readers wishing more information on how to participate in the CREST study should contact GDR/CREST Enterprises, one of the NPD Group of marketing and research companies, 9801 West Higgins Road, Rosemont, IL 60081.

The CREST study is designed to provide information on customer behavior, not attitudes. This study will, therefore, provide the user with information on how much people spend, where they spend, what they spend on and so forth. It will not tell people's attitudes toward a particular issue. Because it is an ongoing study, the CREST study allows comparison against a standard—an aid in the development of trend analysis. This enables the operator to make decisions based on documented trends rather than on casual observation.

TO YOUR HEALTH

Cholesterol: what it is and what you can do to reduce it

By now, cholesterol should be a familiar word to most consumers, often appearing in the media, in advertising and on labels. But just what is cholesterol? Why has it gained all this attention? And how can it affect the needs of your customers?

Cholesterol is a tasteless, odorless, fatty substance which the body cannot live without and is, in fact, capable of producing. However, for many individuals, the need for this internal production can be greatly reduced since the body's demands can be met or exceeded through dietary intake. The problem with cholesterol intake is often too much—not too little.

A heart attack is caused, in most cases, by a gradual buildup of fatty deposits comprised mostly of cholesterol in the artery wall. Research has recently concluded that lowering cholesterol levels in the blood can reduce the risk of this buildup and, therefore, lower the incidence of heart attack in some individuals. For many, one method of lowering cholesterol is dietary restriction.

Where cholesterol comes from . . .

Cholesterol is supplied by foods of animal origin. Any food containing meat or animal fat contains cholesterol. Cholesterol is not the only thing to worry about in terms of health. Fat has even a bigger effect al-

though the reasons are not well understood. Saturated fats usually raise cholesterol levels. Saturated fats are characteristically fats that are solid at room temperature. They are usually found in foods of animal origin, although there are a few exceptions. The two

changes, you can modify your menu or recipes to serve them. You may want to consider including several low cholesterol items on your menu or be prepared to respond to special requests. To modify your recipes to meet the low cholesterol needs of your

*With this issue NRA NEWS
begins a regular
column by NRA staff
nutritionist Karen Sherwood,
a registered dietitian.*

most notable are coconut and palm oils. In addition, non-saturated vegetable oils can become saturated through a chemical process called hydrogenation. The process of converting vegetable oil into vegetable shortening is an example of this. Cholesterol and saturated fats are two items restaurateurs will want to reduce or eliminate when adapting recipes or menu selections.

Polyunsaturated fats are liquid at room temperature and are of vegetable origin. They contribute to cholesterol reduction. That is the reason that corn, safflower, soybean and sesame oils are characteristically part of low-cholesterol diets.

Two oils are considered neutral in the sense they do not significantly change cholesterol levels. They are peanut and olive oils.

How to modify recipes . . .

Many Americans now follow low or reduced cholesterol diets. With a few

customers, here are a few guidelines.

- **Egg yolks have a very high cholesterol content.** Use an egg substitute or, if possible, reduce the number of egg yolks used and add additional egg whites (only the yolk has the cholesterol).

- **The higher the fat content or marbling of the meat, the higher the amount of cholesterol and saturated fat.** Consumers restricting cholesterol intake want to avoid high fat meats. Provide very lean, low-fat meat choices on your menu. The best choices are poultry and fish items. (Shrimp, however, is not a low cholesterol item.) Also trim any visible fat prior to cooking. This includes removing poultry skin.

- **Eliminate the use of high-fat dairy products in your recipes.** Use skim or low-fat milk in place of whole milk. (One cup whole milk = one cup skim milk + two teaspoons vegetable oil.) Choose low-fat cheeses for recipes, such as cottage, farmer, pot or skim milk

mozzarella. In the place of sour cream, use low-fat, plain yogurt. (One cup sour cream = $\frac{1}{2}$ cup margarine + $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sour milk, yogurt, buttermilk or mayonnaise-type salad dressing.)

- **Substitute polyunsaturated margarine or oils for butter or shortening.** Liquid vegetable oils or margarine should be used in cooking, replacing shortening or butter.

- **Avoid the use of lard or shortening for use in baked products.** Use only cocoa for chocolate flavoring—not chocolate chips or chocolate squares. (One ounce unsweetened chocolate = three teaspoons cocoa powder + one tablespoon margarine.) Avoid desserts that use eggs as the main ingredient, such as custards or souffles. (Although eggs are a big source of cholesterol, consider the total amount used and percentage in one serving. A cake is acceptable if made with margarine or polyunsaturated oil and the percent of egg per serving is low.)

- **Consider lower cholesterol alternatives.** For example, use pita bread or melba toast in place of high fat crackers. Egg whites may be used alone, instead of whole eggs, to moisten or bind foods, such as stuffing. And hardened fat can be removed from soups and gravies that are prepared ahead of time and chilled.

By including several low cholesterol choices on your menu and being prepared to modify an item upon request you can provide your customers with the luxury of choice and the impression of consideration. They will be able to eat to their heart's content!

by Cecelia Niepold

With this issue **NRA NEWS** introduces a new column to help members keep their finger on the business pulse of the food-service industry. Each month, one member will be highlighted from each of the nine census regions to give readers a clearer sense of the national business climate. As these first nine interviews suggest, the severe winter did affect business in some areas of the country.

EAST SOUTH CENTRAL

Location:

Bowling Green, KY

NRA member: Louella Fong

Operation: Ambrosia Restaurant and Catering

Profile: A catering business with a walk-in restaurant that serves lunch Monday through Friday.

In business: Almost 3 years

Seats: 100

Meals served: Lunch, dinner

The restaurant business is still somewhat slow in Bowling Green, but the catering business is going strong, according to **Louella Fong**. "People don't seem to be eating out as much. I don't know about the rest of the country, but the restaurant business here hasn't picked up with the economy," she says. The catering part of her operation is doing very well, however. Even during the recession, Fong's catering business remained brisk.

What separates her catering business from the competition? "Basically the quality of the food," maintains Fong, who customizes each order. Methods of preparation and presentation are constantly changing to ensure clients have a different menu for each function. Ambrosia is also known for its nutrition-ori-

HOW'S BUSINESS?



- ☐ New England
- ☐ Middle Atlantic
- ☐ South Atlantic
- ☐ East South Central
- ☐ West South Central
- ☐ East North Central
- ☐ West North Central
- ☐ Mountain
- ☐ Pacific

ented menus. "We don't fry or bread anything, which is unusual in the South," Fong boasts.

NEW ENGLAND

Location: Hartford, CT

NRA member: Jay DuMond

Operation:

The Restaurant Group **Profile:** Umbrella organization operating four restaurants: a Mexican unit, two casual theme restaurants, a lunch cafe with live entertainment at night, a fine dining establishment and an upscale seafood restaurant in a renovated old mill.

In business: 12 years

Seats: Average 200

Meals served: Lunch, dinner

Jay DuMond, president of the Restaurant Group, is very positive about the business climate in Hartford. He adds that Hartford's market is unique and somewhat recession proof because it is a major insurance capital. "Insurance companies don't seem to suffer a lot of ups and downs," he says.

Within the last six months, three new office towers opened near one of

the restaurants, which helped boost sales 30 percent above the previous year's levels. That kind of leap doesn't happen every day, but DuMond is optimistic about Hartford's economy maintaining its growth over the long run. So he is opening two more restaurants by the end of the year.

"We take pride in anticipating trends," DuMond maintains. This requires staying on top of changes occurring around the country and using common sense and gut feelings to pick the ones that will do well in Hartford's relatively conservative market.

WEST NORTH CENTRAL

Location:

Council Grove, KS

NRA members: Helen C.

Judd, Charles L. Judd

Operation: Hays House

Profile: Restored historic restaurant built in 1857

In business: 10 years

Seats: 250

Meals served: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

Business looked a little bleak this winter in Council

Grove—a small town of 2,300 people in agricultural Kansas. "During January, February and the first two weeks of March, business was very slow," says **Helen Judd**. The weather had been bad, and one of the major industries in town—a creamery—was slated to close.

Since then the business outlook has brightened considerably, thanks to the innovative townspeople. They banded together and raised \$18,000 to promote Council Grove as a tourist spot.

There are 12 national historical landmarks in the town, and Hays House is one of them.

What makes Hays House special? It could be the oldest continuously operating restaurant west of the Mississippi. Built by the government representative to the Kansas Indians, it has been serving food since 1857.

Besides being rich in history, the Hays House also takes pride in its menu. "We make our own bread, age meat right on the premises, cut our own steaks and even fry our chicken in big black skillets," says **Helen Judd**.

They also offer a unique light entree developed by their daughter. It features marinated bits of steak in a special sauce, served with a cranberry muffin—all for under 400 calories. It's been so successful, Hays House now offers the dish at dinner with a fresh vegetable.

EAST NORTH CENTRAL

Location: Cincinnati, OH

NRA member: John

Humphrey

Operation: Zino's, Inc.

Profile: Three table-service restaurants and a deli operating out of a central commissary

In business: 20 years
Seats: Average 125
Meals served: Lunch, dinner

In Cincinnati, the cold winter weather put a damper on business. "We were doing really well up through the fall. Then the cold weather hit, and we had a bad winter," says **John Humphrey**. Humphrey is optimistic about the upcoming year, however. He believes his operation learned some important lessons during the recession that will help improve business.

Humphrey is planning some changes in the upcoming year. They include renovating one restaurant and opening another unit by the end of the year. Lighter entrees have been added to the menu, and there are more carryout items. Picnic baskets, in particular, have been well received.

MIDDLE ATLANTIC

Location: New York, NY
NRA member: Michael O'Neal

Operation: The Ginger Man Group

Profile: Group includes seven restaurants ranging from fine dining establishments to more casual eateries.

In business: 20 years

Seats: Average 200

Meals served: Lunch, dinner

Business is looking up in the Big Apple. "In New York right now we're feeling a good surge. Last fall was terrific as far as sales are concerned, and I expect the spring will be good, too," reports **Michael O'Neal**, president of the Ginger Man Group and NRA board member.

According to O'Neal, business in New York City can be affected by the theater, the stock market, tourism and even the weather. "For example the theater

seems to be doing pretty well this year, and people seem to be spending more money. So business is better," says O'Neal.

MOUNTAIN

Location: Challis, ID

NRA member: John Walker

Operation: Challis House and Y Inn Cafe, Inc.

Profile: Three different operations under one roof—a dining room, cafe and bar.

In business: 9 years

Seats: 180

Meals served: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

Business in Challis—a small town of 1,000 in the middle of Idaho—has been slow. "Business is down about 15 percent from last year—probably due to the terrible winter," says **John Walker**, owner of Challis House and Y Inn Cafe, Inc. (named after the fork in the road that was once on the restaurant site).

According to Walker, his business used to depend heavily on summer tourists, but business evened out in 1980 when a mine was being built in the area. "Because we had 1,000 extra workers at the mine, we didn't experience the recession like the rest of the country," says Walker.

Now half of these workers have left because the mine is fully operational—and this probably hurt business.

Walker's key to success? Consistency—in price and selections. "We've experimented and tried different dishes, but mainly our customers want beef," he says.

WEST SOUTH CENTRAL

Location: New Orleans, LA

NRA member: Jason Clevenger

Operation: Upperline Restaurant

Profile: Small bistro.

In business: 14 months

Seats: 44

Meals served: Lunch, dinner

In New Orleans the restaurant business is expanding, according to **Jason Clevenger**, owner and chef of the Upperline Restaurant.

His establishment is one of 12 new restaurants that have opened in the New Orleans uptown area within the last 18 months. The majority are small bistro/cafes, and most are doing well.

Already Clevenger's restaurant has surpassed his expectations. Clevenger is optimistic about future growth and may expand into the building next door.

How has he differentiated his restaurant from the other new establishments in the uptown area? By the dishes he offers and by creative marketing. In addition to early bird specials, the restaurant caters to the late-night crowd.

PACIFIC

Location: San Diego, CA

NRA member: Harold Hoersch

Operation: Hob Nob Hill

Profile: Family restaurant

In business: 40 years

Seats: 116

Meals served: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

Things look bright for the restaurant business in southern California, according to **Harold Hoersch**. "The general California economy is good, and it is getting better. San Diego itself has many new restaurants and hotels," he says. Hoersch believes 1984 may be a record year for his establishment.

According to Hoersch, his business is thriving because he fills a need for a certain type of restaurant.

"We don't have too much competition because we're serving a market that's being abandoned—a general restaurant that serves all three meals and covers the food spectrum," he says. He also concentrates on giving his customers the amenities they expect.

SOUTH ATLANTIC

Location: Naples, FL

NRA member: Anthony Ridgway

Operation:

A.W. Ridgway, Inc.

Profile: Three concepts in one establishment—an upscale restaurant, a casual eatery and a take-out.

In business: 12 years

Seats: 220

Meals served: Lunch, dinner

Although the overall economic situation in the Sunbelt is bright, some areas of the south Florida economy are still somewhat slow.

This may be partially due to overexpansion, according to **Tony Ridgway**. "We may have more restaurants and hotels than we really need," he speculates. Even so, his operation is performing well.

An increased emphasis on budgeting and goal setting has contributed to his success. His operation is now completely computerized. This, he claims, enables him to accurately and consistently monitor his restaurant's progress. Ridgway has also developed an incentive program to increase his staff's efficiency and reduce costs.

How has he adapted to the slow, off-season summer months—a potential problem in Florida? In addition to budgeting, planning and trying new merchandising techniques, he has agreed to manage a restaurant in North Carolina during the slow Florida summer.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Happy Joe's really delivers

When you need a pizza, you need a pizza—no matter where you are. That's how Joe Whitty, founder and operator of Happy Joe's, a 99-unit chain of pizza and ice cream parlors in Bettendorf, IA, feels. And to prove he is a man of his word, Whitty even delivers pizzas to his boating customers on the Mississippi River—via a hot air balloon.

The hot air balloon is flown almost everyday, and when Whitty isn't making deliveries, he is giving his customers rides for birthdays, anniversaries and just to say thanks for their business.

Other marketing tools used by Whitty include antique fire trucks, antique motorcycles with a sidecar



and even portable pizza and ice cream parlors.

Whitty claims that if his customers can come into his restaurant and enjoy his pizza and ice cream, then he can go into their community and make them happy.

—Happy Joe's

Mobile hamburger kiosks that look like the real thing

America—the home of the hamburger—will soon be invaded by the Superburger. What is the Superburger? The Superburger is a catering kiosk in the shape of a giant hamburger.

Invented by Paul Markham, an Englishman in the catering and fast food business, the booth is made of eye-catching plastic, reinforced in glass, and closely resembles a hamburger in color and shape. The Superburger will be appearing this spring and summer in British resorts, leisure centers and amusement parks as well as in Florida and California.

—Litagency Limited

Will the real Twinkie eater please stand up?

What do people really eat? When eating healthy and keeping fit seem to be the "in" things to do, few people are likely to admit to liking Twinkies, jello or donuts. Yet they eat these foods.

NPD Research, Inc., a marketing and research firm in Port Washington, NY, suspected there may be a discrepancy in what people say they eat and what they actually do eat. So, in order to give food companies a more accurate picture of the market for new products, they developed a study to examine both attitudes on nutrition and food and eating patterns.

NPD found that the 1,000 households questioned divided into five groups: meat and potato eaters, families with children, natural food eaters, sophisticates (who shop at gourmet counters and wine stores) and dieters.

Sure enough, the groups didn't stick to their stated preferences. For example, naturalists, as expected, frequently eat fresh fruit, rice, natural cereal, bran bread, wheat germ, yogurt, granola bars and salad; but surprisingly, they also frequently eat French toast with syrup, chocolate chips, cake, pretzels and jello. And sophisticates were above-average eaters of donuts, frozen dinners and pre-packaged cakes and Hostess Twinkies.

—Wall Street Journal

Imitation truffles in Japan

Truffles—a dark brown fungus highly prized by food fanciers—have been a decidedly French delicacy for a long time. And a rare one. But now the Japanese are about to reproduce them artificially.

A Japanese company has decided that truffles are made of elements also found in ginseng and garlic and has decided to market them worldwide this summer.

Apparently several French experts have sampled the Japanese truffle. All have expressed reservations about the taste.

—Washington Times

A floating hot dog stand

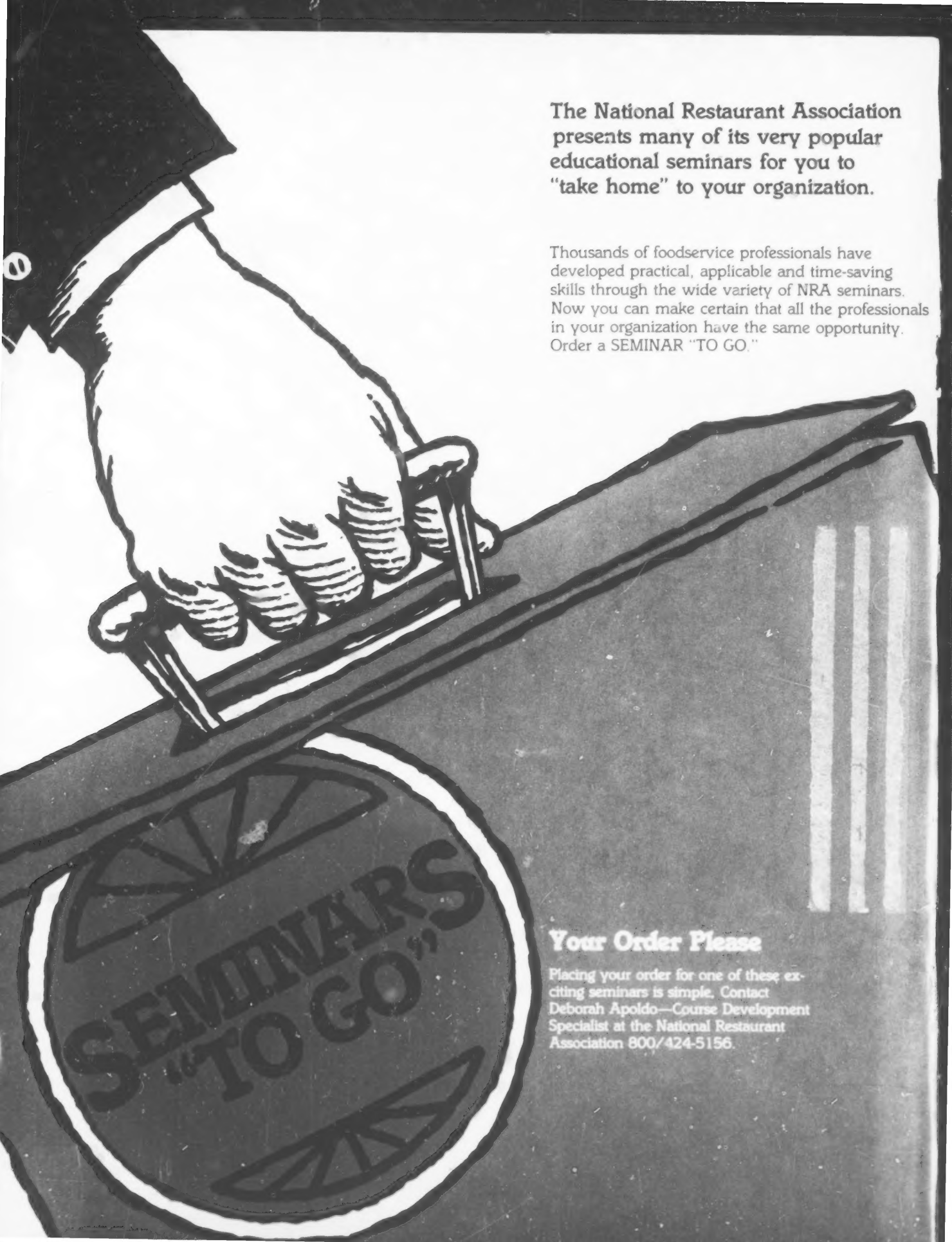
It's been said that "necessity is the mother of invention." And it's been proven by the English family of French Town, NJ. For the past three



summers and as soon as the weather permits this year, the family operates a floating hot dog stand in the middle of the Delaware River for the convenience of thousands of people who ride in canoes and inner tubes.

Their enterprising move has proven to be very successful: On a good day, the floating hot dog stand hails in about \$300 from the sale of 150 hot dogs and 300 iced drinks. Some of this booty goes to the American Cancer Society, a local fire company and a rescue squad.

—NRA NEWS interview



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